POLYEUCTES,
OR THE
MARTYR.
A
TRAGEDY:

BY

Sr. *WILLIAM LOWER.*

LONDON,

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THE ARGUMENT:

Polyeuctus and *Nearchus* were two Cavaleirs ſtraightly tyed together in Amity; they lived in the year 250. under the Empire of *Decius*; their aboad was in *Melitene*, Capital City of *Armenia*, their Religion different, *Nearchus* was a Chriſtian, and *Polyeuctus* following yet the Sect of the *Gentiles*; but having all the qualities worthy of a Chriſtian, and a great inclination to become ſo: The Emperour having cauſed an Edict to be publiſhed very rigorous againſt the Chriſtians, this Publication gave a great trouble to *Nearchus*; not for feare of the puniſhments wherewith he was threatned, but for the apprehenſion which he had, that their Amity might ſuffer ſome ſeparation or coldneſs by this Edict, ſeeing the puniſhments that were propoſed therin to thoſe of the Religion, and the Honours promiſed to thoſe of the contrary party; He conceived therat ſo great a diſpleaſure, that his Friend perceived it, and having obliged him to tell him the cauſe therof, he took the occaſion to open his heart unto him. Fear not, ſaid he, that the Em-

perours Edict ſhould diſ-unite us: I ſaw this night the CHRIST which you adore, he took from me a filthy Robe, to apparel me with a Luminous one, and made me mount upon a winged Horſe to follow him. This Viſion hath reſolved me wholly to do that which I long time meditated: the name of a CHRISTIAN is only wanting to me, and you your ſelfe as often as you have ſpoken unto me of your great MESSIAS, might have obſerved that I alwaies hearkned unto you with reſpect, and when you read unto me his Life and Doctrine, I alwaies admired the Sanctity of his Actions and Diſcourſes. O *Nearchus* if I thought not my ſelf unworthy to come unto him without being initiated with his Myſteries, and to have received the Grace of his Sacraments, how you ſhould behold the Ardor break forth, which I have to dye for his Glory and the ſupport of his Eternall Truths! *Nearchus* having cleered him of the ſcruple wherin he was, by the example of the good Thief, who in a moment merited Heaven, though he had not received Baptiſme; preſently our Martyr full of a holy Fervour, took the Emperours Edict, ſpit upon't, and tore it in peices, which he caſt unto the Wind, and ſeeing the Idols which the people carried upon the Altars to adore them, he ſnatch'd them away from thoſe that bare them, brake them againſt the ground, and trod them under his feet, aſtoniſhing all the

World,

World, and his friend likewiſe, by the heat of that Zeal, which he expected not.

His Father-in-Law *Felix*, who had the Emperours Commiſſion to perſecute the Chriſtians, having ſeen himſelf what his Son-in-law had done, ſeized with grief to ſee the hope and prop of his Family loſt, endeavoured to ſhake his conſtancy, firſt by fair words, then by threatnings, laſtly by ſtroaks, which he made his Executioners to give him on the face: But not able to prevail herewith, for a laſt attempt he ſent unto him his Daughter *Paulina*, to ſee if her tears had not more power upon the Spirit of a Husband, then the Artifices and Rigours had had: He gained nothing by that, on the contrary, ſeeing that his firmneſs had converted many *Pagans*, he condemned him to looſe his head; this Sentence was executed preſently, and the holy Martyr without other Baptiſme then of his blood, went to take poſſeſſion of the Glory which God hath promiſed to thoſe that renounce themſelves for the love of him.

See in few words the true ſtory of *Polyeuctes* Martyrdom; the dream of *Paulina*, the love of *Severus*, the effectuall Baptiſme of *Polyeuctes*, the Sacrifice for the Emperours Victory, the dignity of *Felix*, whom I make Governour of *Armenia*, the death of *Nearchus*, the converſion of *Felix*, and of *Paulina*, are the Inventions and Embelliſhments of the Stage, only the Victory of the Emperour againſt the *Perſians* hath

hath ſome foundation in the Hiſtory, and without ſeeking for other Authors, it is reported by *Monſieur Coëffoteau* in his Roman Hiſtory; but he ſayes not, neither that he impoſed tribute on them, nor that he ſent to make Sacrifices of thanks in *Armenia*.

If I have added theſe Incidents and Particularities according to Art, or no, the Judicious ſhall cenſure it; but my aime is not to juſtifie them, but only to advertiſe the Reader of that which he may beleive.

ACTORS

ACTORS.

Felix, Roman Senator, Governour of *Armenia*.
Polyeuctes, Lord of *Armenia*, Son-in-law to *Felix*.
Severus, Roman Knight, Favourite of the Emperour.
Nearchus, *Armenian* Lord, Friend to *Polyeuctes*.
Paulina, Daughter to *Felix*, and Wife to *Polyeuctes*.
Stratonica, a Lady, friend *to Paulina*.
Albin, Friend to *Felix*.
Fabian, Domestick Servant to *Severus*.
Cleon, Domestick Servant to *Felix*.

Three Guards.

The Scene is *Miletene*, Capitall City of *Armenia* in the Palace of *Felix*.

POLY-

POLYEUCTES,
OR,
THE MARTYR.
A
CHRISTIAN TRAGEDY.

ACTUS primus, SCENA prima.

Polyeuctes, Nearchus.

Nearchus.

AND what! you ſtick upon a Womans Dreams?
Can ſuch weak Subjects trouble this great Soul?
And this heart ſo approv'd in War, can it
Receive Alarum from an idle Fantaſie?
Pol. I know what a Dream is, and what beleif
We ought to give to its extravagance,
That a confus'd maſs of Nocturnall Vapours
Formeth vain Objects, which at waking vaniſh;
But you know not, Sir, what a woman is,
Nor the juſt power ſhe takes upon a Soul,
When having long time found the art to charm us,
Bright *Hymens* Torches flame about our Beds.
Paulina without reaſon plung'd in grief,

Pol. Fears and believs already that ſhe ſees
My death, which ſhe hath dream'd; ſhe doth oppoſe
Her tears to my deſign, and laboureth
To hinder me from going forth the pallace;
I ſleight her fears, but yield unto her tears;
And my heart tender, but not terrifi'd.
Dares not diſpleaſe the eys have conquer'd it:
Nearchus, is th' occaſion ſo preſſing
That it may not a little be deferr'd
Upon a Lovers ſighs? let us a while
Wave this deſigne which burthens her with grief,
To morrow we can do't aſwel's to day.

Nearc: Yes, if you were aſſur'd to live ſo long,
And to perſever in your faith; that God
Which houlds our ſoul, and numbereth our days,
Hath not ingag'd himſelf that you ſhall ſee
The morning break; he is all juſt and good,
But his effectuall grace deſcends not always
With the ſame efficacy; after certain moments
Which we loſe by delays, ſhe quits thoſe darts
Which penetrate our ſouls, the arm that freely
Diſpenſed her unto us, ſtops his bounty;
As being offended, our dull heart is hardened;
That holy heat which carrieth us to good,
Fals on a Rock, and operates no more.
That zeal which preſſed you to have recourſe
To ſacred baptiſm, languiſhing already,
Ceaſes to be the ſame; and for ſome ſighs
Which you have heard, its flame doth diſſipate
It ſelf; and is upon the point to vaniſh.

Pol. You know me ill, the ſelf ſame heat ſtill burns me,
And the deſire increaſeth when th' effect
Recoyls; thoſe tears which with a Husbands Eye
I look upon, leave me as good a Chriſtian
In heart as you; but to receave the ſeal
And ſacred character thereof, which waſhes
Our ſins in ſaving water, and in opening
Our Eyes with a divine Ray, doth reſtore us
Unto the firſt right which we had to Heaven,
Though I prefer it before all the greatneſs
Of Empires as the ſupream good, and that
Which I alone aſpire to, I believe

I may, to ſatisfie a lawfull love,
Defer this ſacred baptiſm for a day.
Nearc: Thus the malicious enemy of man
Abuſeth you, what he can't do by force,
He doth attempt by policy, ſtill jealous
Of good deſigns, which he endeavoureth
To ſhake; when he can't break them, he puts on
With all the power he can to ſtop their courſe.
With obſtacle upon obſtacle he is comming
To trouble yours, to day by tears, to morrow
By ſomething elſe; this dream ſo full of horrour
Is but the flouriſh of his firſt illuſions,
Pol. He ſets all things a work, both prayer and threatning.
He aſſaults always, and is never weary,
He thinks to do at laſt what yet he cannot,
And what we do defer, concludes half broken.
Deſtroy his firſt ſtroaks, let *Paulina* weep:
God would not have a heart that the world rules;
Who looks upon him when his voice doth call him
At diſtance, and as doubtfull in his choice,
Hearkens unto another voice then his,
Pol. To give our ſelvs to him, muſt we love no body?
Nearc: We may love all, he ſuffers, he ordains it;
But this great King of Kings, this Lord of Lords
Will have the firſt love and the chiefeſt honours.
As nothing's equall to his ſupreame Greatnes,
So nothing muſt be lov'd but after him,
And in him; we to pleaſe him muſt neglect
Wife and wealth, friends and fortunes; for his glory
We muſt not ſtick t'expoſe our ſelves to dangers,
Yea, even to death, to pour our bloud forth for him;
But how far are you from this perfect love
Which I could wiſh you as ſo neceſſary
To your ſalvation, and eternal good?
I cannot ſpeak unto you, *Polyeuctes*,
But with tears in mine eyes; now that we are
Hated in every place, that all believe
They ſerve the State well when they perſecute us,
Now that a Chriſtian is expos'd a butt
Unto the ſharpeſt torments, how can you
Or'ecome the griefe on't, if you can't reſiſt
A Womans tears?

Pol. You do'nt aſtoniſh me ;
The Pitty that doth wound me doth proceed
From a great courage rather then from weakneſs ;
Nearchus, on my equals a faire eye
Hath had much force, he feareth to offend it,
That dreads not death ; and if we muſt affront
The cruel'ſt puniſhments, to find delights
And pleaſures there, your God whom I dare not
Yet to call mine, in making me a Chriſtian,
Will give me ſtrength enough to undergo them.
Nearc. Haſte then to be one.
Pol. Yes, I fly, *Nearchus*,
I long to bear the glorious mark of it,
But my *Paulina* doth afflict her ſelf,
And can't conſent, ſo much this dream doth trouble her,
To leave me to go forth.
Nearc. Your ſafe return
Will be more pleaſing to her ; in an hour,
Or little more you ſhall wipe off her tears,
The happineſs will ſeem again to ſee you
More ſweet, by how much more ſhe hath lamented
So dear a Husband. Come, we are expected.
Pol. Appeaſe her fear, and calm her ſorrow then,
She comes again.
Nearc. Fly, fly.
Pol. Alas ! I cannot.
Nearc. You muſt, Sir, to be ſafe ; Oh fly an Enemy
That knows your weakneſs, that doth finde it eaſily,
That woundeth with the eys, whoſe ſtroke doth kill
And pleaſe, becauſe receav'd not 'gainſt your will.

Scena Secunda.

Polyeuctes, Nearchus, Paulina, Stratonica.

Polyeuctes.
LEt's fly then, ſince we muſt, adiew, *Paulina*,
Adiew, within an hour, or little more
I will return again here.
Paul. What occaſion
So preſſing doth invite you to go forth ?

Doth

Doth it concern your honour, or your life?
Pol. Much more then either.
Paul. What's the ſecret then?
Pol: You ſhall know one day, I am loath to leave you,
But yet I muſt.
Paul. D'ee love me?
Pol. Witneſs Heaven
A thouſand times more then my ſelf I love you,
But ——
Paul. But you care not for my diſcontent;
Should you have Secrets that I may not know?
What proof of love is this; ith' name of *Himen*,
Give only to my tears this fatall journey.
Pol. A dream makes you afraid!
Paul. I know thoſe preſages
Are vain, but I do love you, and I fear.
Pol. For an hours abſence fear no hurt; adiew,
Your tears prevail too much upon me, and
I feel my heart even ready to revolt,
There's no reſiſting her but in my flight. —— *Exit.*

Scena Tertia.

Paulina, Stratonica.

Paulina.
GO, and neglect my tears, haſt to precipitate thee
Before the death, which the Gods have predicted
Unto me, follow that ſame fatall Agent
Of thy ill deſtinies, who, perhaps may give thee
Into the hands of murtherers. See, *Stratonica*
In this ſad age wherein we live, what Empire
We have upon the ſtubborn Spirits of men;
See what is left us, and the ordinary
Effect of that love which they offer us,
And of the vowes they make us; whilſt they are
But Lovers, we are Soveraigns; and untill
They 've gain'd the conqueſt, we are us'd as Queens,
But after Marriage they are Kings by turn.
Strat. Sure *Polyeuctes*, wants no love for you;
Though with full confidence he treat you not.

In

In this affair, though he depart in ſpight
Of all your tears: it is a part of prudence;
Without afflicting you preſume with me,
That it is fit he ſhould conceale the cauſe,
Aſſure your ſelf he hath juſt reaſon for it:
A Husband muſt not tell us every thing,
Let him be ſometimes free, and not abaſe him
To render us accompt ſtill of his ſteps.
We both have but one heart, which feels the ſame
Traverſes, but this heart hath notwithſtanding
Its divers functions; and the Law of marriage
Which holdeth you together, ordains not
That he ſhould tremble when you tremble, Madam,
What maketh you afrayd, troubles not him,
He's an Armenian, and you are a Roman,
And you may pleaſe to underſtand that our
Two Nations ha'nt the ſame impreſſions
Upon this ſubject. A dream paſſeth with us
For a ridiculous phanſie, it doth leave us,
Nor hope, nor fear, nor ſcruple; but it carries
Authority in Rome, and paſſeth for
A faithfull mirrour of fatality.

Paul. Mine's very ſtrange, and though Armenian,
I believe that thy fear would equall mine,
If by my bare recitall ſuch like horrors
Had ſtruck thy Spirit.

Strat. To recount our evils,
We eaſe them oftentimes.

Paul. Attend me then;
But I muſt tell thee more, and that thou mayſt
The better comprehend this ſad diſcourſe,
I will diſcover unto thee my weakneſs
In the relation of my firſt amours;
A woman that loves honour may confeſs
Without ſhame thoſe ſurprizes of the ſences
Which reaſon doth orecome, chiefly it is
In theſe aſſaults that vertue doth break forth,
We doubt that heart that hath not combated.
In Rome where I was born this wretched face
Captiv'd the courage of a Roman knight
Called *Severus*. Pray excuſe the ſighes
Which yet a name too dear to my deſires,

Snatches

Snatches out of my boſome.
Strat: Was it he
That not long ſince at th'expence of his life
Sav'd th'Emperour *Decius* from his enemies;
Who dying drew the victory from the Perſians
And turn'd the chance upon the Roman Eagles?
He that amongſt ſo many bodies ſacrific'd
Unto his Maſter, could not be found out,
Or at leaſt known, to whom *Decius* at laſt
Made ſumptuous monuments to be rais'd in vain?
Paul. Alas! it was the ſame, and never did
Our Rome produce a greater heart, nor ſaw
A braver man ſince thou haſt underſtood him,
Il'e ſpeak no more of him; *Statonica*,
I lov'd him, he deſerved well; but whereto
Serves merit where blind fortune is defective?
The one is great in him, the other weak
And common, too invincible obſtacle,
O're which a vertuous Lover very ſeldome
Triumpheth with a father.
Strat. Fair occaſion,
And worthy a rare conſtancy!
Paul. Rather ſay
An overnice, fooliſh and baſe reſiſtance;
What ever fruit one might receive from thence,
Tis not a vertue but for who would faile:
In this great love which I had for *Severus*,
I ſtill expected from my Fathers hand
A Husband, and my reaſon never own'd
The amiable Treaſon of mine eyes.
He did poſſeſs my heart, my thought, my wiſhes,
I hid not from him how much I was wounded,
We ſigh'd together and wept our misfortunes,
But he in ſtead of hope had nought but tears,
And notwithſtanding his ſweet ſighs and prayers
My Father and my duty were inexorable.
Laſtly I left Rome, and this perfect lover,
To follow here my father in his government,
And he, even deſperate, went unto the Army
To ſeek th' illuſtrious fame of a fair death.
Thou know'ſt the reſt; my comming to this place
Made me ſee *Polyeuctes*, and I pleas'd

His eyes; My Father finding that he was
The chief of the Nobility, was raviſh'd
With joy that he ſhould take me for his Miſtreſs,
And he believ'd himſelf by his allyance
Sure to be more redoubted and conſiderable.
He lik'd his love, and did conclude the marriage.
And I ſeeing me deſtin'd to his bed
Gave unto his affection through duty
All what the other had through inclination;
If thou canſt doubt thereof, judge by the fear
Wherewith for him thou ſeeſt my ſoul is troubled.

Strat. You love him, I believe, as well as one
Can love, but after all what dream could have
Diſturb'd you?

Paul. This laſt night me thought I ſaw
Th' unfortunate *Severus* with revenge,
In hand, and with an Eye flaming with anger;
He was not covered with thoſe ſorry rags,
A deſolate ſhade doth bring with it from graves,
He was not pierced with thoſe glorious ſtrokes
Which cutting off his life aſſure his memory;
He ſeem'd triumphant like unto our *Ceſar*
When on his Charriot he victoriouſly
Doth enter Rome; after a little fear
Which his ſight gave me, carry unto whom
Thou wilt the favour that is due to me,
Ingratefull, (ſaid he) and this day expir'd,
Lament at leiſure him thou haſt preferr'd
Before me. At theſe words I trembled,
My ſoul was troubled; afterward an impious
Aſſembly of the Chriſtians to advance
Th' effect of this fatall and ſad diſcourſe.
Threw *Polyeuctes* at his Rivals feet;
Forthwith I call'd my Father to his ayd.
Alas! 'tis this that moſt doth trouble me,
I ſaw my Father enter with a Ponyard
In hand, and his arm rais'd to pierce his boſom.
There my grief too ſtrong hath conceiv'd thoſe Images,
The bloud of *Polyeuctes* hath contented
Their furies, I know neither how, nor when
They kill'd him, but I know that to his death
All have contributed. Behold my dream.

Strat.

Strat. 'Tis true, tis ſad, but your ſoul muſt reſiſt
Thoſe fears, the viſion of it ſelf may give
Some horror, but no juſt fear unto you.
Should you a death fear from a Father, who
Doth love your Husband, and doth honour him.
And whoſe juſt choice hath given you unto him,
To make himſelfe thereby here in this Countrey
A ſure and firm ſupport?
Paul. He hath himſelf
Told me as much, and laugh'd at my alarms,
But I do fear the Chriſtians plots and charms,
And that upon my Husband they'l revenge
The bloud my Father hath ſo freely ſhed.
Strat. Their Sect is mad, impious, and ſacrilegious,
And in their Sacrifice uſe ſorcery;
But this their fury goes no further then
To break our Altars, its purſues the Gods,
But reacheth not to mortals, whatſoever
Severity our anger doth diſplay
Upon them, they do ſuffer without murmur,
And die with joy, and ſince the time they were
Treated as criminals of State, one cannot
Charge them with any murther.
Paul. Peace, my Father.

Scena Quarta.

Felix, Albin, Paulina, Stratonica.

Felix.
DAughter, thy dream hath plung'd me in ſtrange fears
Since yeſterday, I doubt th' effects thereof,
Which ſeem t'approach.
Paul. I do beſeech you, tell me
What iſt you feel?
Felix. Severus is not dead.
Paul. What evil doth his life do unto us?
Felix. He is the Favourite
Of th' Emperour *Decius.*
Paul. After having ſaved him
From the hands of his Enemies the hope
Of ſuch a rank juſtly might be allow'd him,

Thus Fortune to great hearts ſo often cruel,
Reſolvs her ſelf ſometimes to do them juſtice.
Felix. He's comming here himſelf.
Paul. What? is he comming?
Felix. Thou ſhalt receive his Viſit.
Paul: That's too much;
But how do you know this? Sir.
Felix. Albin met
In the adjacent field, a troup of Courtiers
Attending him in crouds which ſhewed plainly
His rank and credit, but *Albinus* tell her
That which his People told thee.
Albin. You know, Madam,
What that great Expedition was, which made us
So fortunate by his loſs, where th' Emperour
A Priſoner, diſ-ingaged by his hand,
Confirm'd again his almoſt conquered party;
Whilſt that his vertue fell amongſt the number,
You know the honours that he caus'd to be
Done to his ſhadow, when his body could not
Be found amongſt the dead. The King of Perſia
Witneſs of his high acts, though to his damage,
Cauſed him to be carry'd off, and brought
Into his Tent, he did deſire to know
His face though dead, every one did lament him,
Covered with wounds, though jealous of his glory.
Within a while he ſhew'd ſome ſign of life:
This generous Monarch was o're joy'd therewith,
And though o'recome, thought not of his misfortune;
To honour vertue in its very Authour,
He caus'd that ſpeciall care ſhould be tane of him;
His cure was ſecret, and at a Months end
His health was perfect, when the King, to gain him,
Offer'd him dignities, allyance, treaſures,
And us'd a thouſand means: when all things fail'd,
After high prayſe beſtow'd on his refuſall,
He ſent to *Decius* to propoſe exchange,
And preſently the Emperour tranſported
With pleaſure, offered to the Perſian
His Brother and a hundred chiefs to chuſe.
So came unto the Camp the valorous
And brave *Severus*, to receive the recompence

Of his high vertue: *Decius* favour was
The worthy price thereof: we fought again,
And were ſurpris'd, yet this misfortune ſerv'd
T'increaſe his glory, he alone reſtabliſh'd
The order, and recovered the victory,
So fair and plain, and by ſuch glorious feats,
That our ſtout Enemies offer'd us tribute,
And made us peace; The Emperour expreſs'd
An infinite love unto him, and being raviſh'd
With the ſucceſs, ſent him into *Armenia*;
He comes to bring the news into this Countrey,
And by a ſacrifice to render thanks
Unto the Gods,

Felix O heaven! to what eſtate
My fortune is reduc'd!

Albin. I learned this
From one that doth belong unto his train,
And haſted here, Sir, to acquaint you with it.

Felix. Oh without doubt he comes to marry thee,
Daughter, the order of a ſacrifice
Is a ſmall thing to him, not worth his preſence,
It is a falſe pretence, whoſe cauſe is love.

Paul. It may well be, he lov'd me very dearly.

Felix. What will not he allow to his reſentment?
And to what point will not his anger carry
A juſt revenge with ſo much power to prop it?
He will deſtroy us, daughter.

Paul. He's too generous.

Felix. Thou wilt in vain flatter a wretched Father;
He will deſtroy us, daughter. Oh regreet
That kils me now, in that I loved not
The naked vertue. Oh *Paulina* really
Thou haſt too much obeyed me, thy courage
Was good, but thy nice duty hath betray'd thee.
How thy rebellion had been favourable
Unto me, how it would have priviledg'd me
From a deplorable condition!
If any hope reſts with me, it is now
No more but in the abſolute power which he
Gives thee upon him: Husband in my favour
The love that doth poſſeſs him, and from whence
My evill doth proceed, produce the remedy.

Paul. Shall I, Shall I ſee ſuch a Puiſſant Conqueror?
And expoſe me unto thoſe eyes that pierce
My heart? Father, I am a Woman, and
I know my weakneſs, I perceive my heart
Already to be intereſted for him,
And will without doubt in ſpight of my faith
Thruſt forth ſome ſigh unworthy both of you
And me, I will not ſee him.
Felix. Re-aſſure
Thy ſoul a little.
Paul. He is alwayes lovely,
And I am alwayes firm, in the power which
His looks have had upon me, I can't anſwer
With all my vertue, therefore I'le not ſee him.
Felix. Daughter you muſt, or you'l betray your Father,
And all your Family.
Paul. It is my duty
T'obey ſince you command, but ſee the perills
Wherein you hazard me.
Felix. I know thy Vertue.
Paul. Without doubt it will vanquiſh, the ſucceſs
Is not the thing that my ſoul doubts, I fear
This ſtubborn combat, and puiſſant troubles
That makes my ſenſes to revolt already;
But ſince I muſt combat an Enemy
I love, permit me t'arm againſt my ſelf,
And give me ſome time to prepare to ſee him.
Felix. Without the Ports I'm going to receive him,
In the mean time call home your ſtragling force,
And think that in thy hands thou holdſt our deſtinies.
Paul. True, I am born to ſacrifice me ſtil
In ſerving as a victime to your will.

The End of the firſt Act.

Actus Secundus. Scena Prima.

Severus, Fabianus.

Severus.

WHilſt *Felix* giveth order for the ſacrifice,
May not I take a time to ſee *Paulina*,
And render to her fair eyes that high homage
Is due unto the Gods? I have not kept
From thee, that it is this which brings me hither;
For the reſt I'm not troubled much, I come
To ſacrifice, but tis unto your beauties,
Whereto I dedicate all my devotions.

Fab. Sir, you ſhall ſee her.

Sev. What joyes do I feel!
Doth this adorable object give conſent
That I ſhall ſee her? have I any power
Upon her ſoul yet? haſt thou ſeen in ſpeaking
To her of me, that ſhe was troubled,
Or what tranſport my comming cauſeth her?
May I hope all things from this happy ſight?
For I would rather periſh then abuſe her
With Letters recommendatory, which
I have to marry her, they are for *Felix*,
Not to triumph of her, my heart was never
Rebellious unto her deſires, and if
My evill fortune ſhould have changed hers,
I would vanquiſh my ſelf and pretend nothing.

Fab. Sir, you ſhall ſee her, I can ſay no more.

Sev. How comes it that thou trembleſt and ſigh'ſt?
Doth ſhe no longer love me? clear this point.

Fab. Sir, I could wiſh you not to ſee her more,
Carry unto ſome higher place the honour
Of your Careſſes, you ſhall find at *Rome*
Ladies enough that will be proud to be
Your Miſtreſſes, and in this high degree
Of power and glory wherein now you are,
The greateſt will eſteem your love a happineſs.

Sev. What ſhould my ſoul ſtoop to ſuch humble thoughts?

Should

Should I eſteem *Paulina* as inferior
Unto my fortune? ſhe hath better uſed it,
I ought to imitate her, I love not
My happineſs but for to merit her.
See, *Fabian*, thy diſcourſe doth trouble me:
Come, let us go to caſt this haughty fortune
Even at her feet, I found it happily
In fights ſeeking a death worthy her Lover,
So then this rank is hers, this favours hers,
And I have nothing that I hould not off her.
Fab. No, Sir, but once again pray do not ſee her.
Sev. Oh! 'tis too much, at laſt cleer me this point;
Haſt thou ſeen coldneſs when thou prayd'ſt acceſs?
Fab. I tremble to declare t'ee, ſhe is ——
Sev. What?
Fab. Married.
Sev. Suſtain me, *Fabian*, this thunder-clap
Is very great, and ſtrikes ſo much the more,
As more it doth ſurpriſe me.
Fab. What's become, Sir,
Of that brave generous courage?
Sev. Conſtancy
Is here of little uſe, when ſuch diſpleaſures
Burthen a great heart, the moſt maſculine vertue
Soon loſeth all its vigour, and when ſouls
Are taken with ſo glittering a fire,
Death troubles them far leſs then ſuch ſurpriſes.
I can ſcarce yet believe thy ſad diſcourſe.
Fab. Paulina's married; fifteen days have paſs'd
Since *Hymen* did appear in ſaffron robes
To ſolemnize the nuptials; *Polyeuctes*,
One of the chiefeſt of th' Armenian Lords
Doth taſte the infinite ſweetneſs of her bed.
Sev. I cannot blame her of an evill choice,
The name of *Polyeuctes* is eſteem'd,
As being deſcended from the bloud of Kings.
Weak comfort for a cureleſs miſery!
Paulina, I ſhall ſee thee by another
Poſſeſs'd! Oh Heaven! that ſpight of me didſt ſend me
Unto the light again! Oh fate! that gav'ſt me
A new hope of my love, take back the favours
Which you have lent me, and reſtore me death

Which you have taken from me; yet let's ſee her,
And in this ſad place make an end to die
In bidding her adiew, that my heart carrying
Her Image to the dead, where I do go,
With its laſt ſigh to her may homage do.
Fab. Conſider, Sir.
Sev. All is conſidered.
What inconvenience fears a deſperate heart?
Conſents ſhe not?
Fab. Yes, Sir, but ——
Sev. 'Tis no matter.
Fab. This lively grief will thereby become ſtronger.
Sev. 'Tis not an evil I intend to cure,
I only will but ſee her, ſigh, and dye.
Fab. You will break forth without doubt in her preſence;
A Lover that doth loſe all hath no more
Complacence, but in ſuch deſpaire he follows
His paſſion which doth thruſt him on to injury,
And imprecation.
Sev. Judge otherwiſe
Of me, my reſpect doth continue yet;
My deſpair, violent as 'tis, adores her;
What reaſon have I to reproach this Lady?
Wherewith can I accuſe her who hath promiſed
Me nothing; ſhe's not perjur'd, ſhe's not light;
Her duty hath betrayd me, her Father,
And my misfortune; but her duty was
Juſt, and her Fathers reaſon guided him;
I impute all the treaſon unto my
Misfortune; ſomewhat leſs of proſperous hap,
And arriv'd ſooner, would have gained one
By th'other, and conſerved me; too happy,
But too late, I could not have gain'd her, I,
Leave me to ſee her, then to ſigh and dye.
Fab. Yes, I will go t'aſſure her that you are
In this extream misfortune ſtrong enough
To overcome your ſelfe, ſhe fears like me
Thoſe firſt provoked motions which a ſudden
And unexpected loſs raiſeth in Lovers,
The violence whereof excites much trouble
Without the preſence of the object to
Redouble it.

Sev.

Sev. I ſee her, *Fabian.*
Fab. Remember, Sir ——
Sev. Another is her Husband,
Alas, my ſad fate! ſhe doth love another;
It is impoſſible my grief to ſmother.

Scena Secunda.

Severus, Paulina, Stratonica, Fabian.

Paulina.
'Tis true, *Severus*, I do love another,
And plead not here for't, every one
Except my ſelf do flatter and abuſe you;
Paulina hath a noble ſoul, and ſpeaks
With open heart, the report of your death
Is not that which deſtroys you, if juſt heaven
Had put my marriage to my choice, I ſhould
To your ſole vertues, Sir, have given my ſelf,
And all the rigour of our former fate
Againſt your merit had made vain attempts;
I ſaw in you Illuſtrious marks enough
To give you worthy preferrence even before
The happieſt Monarchs; but ſince other Laws
My duty did impoſe, what ever Lover
My Father had aſſign'd me, though your valour
Had added to this greatneſs which it gave you,
The ſplendor of a Crown, though I lov'd you
And hated him, I ſhould have ſighed at it,
But yet I ſhould obey, and o're my paſſions,
My reaſon being Soveraign, ſhould have blam'd
My ſighs, and diſſipated all my hatred.
Sev. How happie are you that a ſigh or two
Can eaſily acquit you of your troubles!
So always abſolute Queen of your deſires,
The greateſt changes find you ſtill reſolv'd;
Your ſpirit is carried in the ſtrongeſt love
Unto indifference, and perhaps to ſcorn,
And your ſtout firmneſs without trouble makes
Favour ſucceed contempt, and love diſdain.
Oh how a little of your humour, or

Rather

Rather your vertue would comfort the evils
Of this dejected heart! a ſigh, a tear
Shed with regret, would have already cur'd me
Of loſing you, my reaſon would prevail
Upon enfeebled love, and from indifference
Would go even to oblivion, and my fire
Henceforth commanding over yours, I ſhould
Eſteem me happy in anothers arms.
O too too lovely object, that haſt charm'd me!
Muſt we thus love? is't ſo that you have lov'd me?
Paul. I loved thee *Severus*, and if I
Could ſmother in my ſoul the flame remains there,
What rigorous torments, Gods, ſhould I avoid!
'Tis true, my reaſon tames my paſſions,
But whatſoe're Authority ſhe hath taken
Upon them, ſhe raigns not, but tyrannizeth;
And though the outſide be without commotion,
The inſide is but trouble and ſedition.
A certain charm, I know not what, inclines me
Towards you yet, your merit ſure is great,
Although my reaſon's ſtrong, I ſee it ſtill,
Such as it lights my fires, ſo much more ſtrongly
To work on my affections, as it is
Environed with puiſſance and glory;
I ſee that in all places after you
It draws triumphant victory, that I
Beſt know the price on't, and that it hath not
Deceiv'd the generous hope I conceiv'd of it.
But that ſame duty which in *Rome* ſubdu'd it,
And makes me ſubject to the Law of Man here,
Repulſeth ſtill ſo ſtrongly the aſſault
Of ſo many allurements, that it tears
My ſoul, but doth not ſhake it; 'tis that vertue
Even cruel to our own deſires, which you
Should praiſe when you blaſpheam it; if you pleaſe
You may complain on't, but yet praiſe its rigour
That triumpheth o're you and or'e my heart
At one time, lower thoughts could not have merited
That perfect love which you have born unto me.
Sev. O ſweet *Paulina*, pardon a blind grief,
Which knoweth nothing but exceſs of miſery.
I named it inconſtancy, and took

For crimes th'indeavours of a vertuous duty.
I do beſeech you ſhew leſs to my ſenſes
The greatneſs of my Loſs, and of your worth,
And ſo through pitty hiding this rare vertue,
That feeds my fires even when ſhe ſeparates us,
Make ſome defects appear that may ſucceſſively
Weaken my grief together with my love.
Paul. Alas! this vertue, though invincible ſtill,
Makes but appear a ſoul too ſenſible,
Theſe tears are witneſſes thereof, and theſe
Effeminate ſighs which ſtir up the remembrance
Of our firſt fires, too rigorous effects
Of a beloved preſence, againſt which
My duty hath too little of defence.
But if you do eſteem this vertuous duty,
keep me the glory on't, and ceaſe to ſee me,
Spare me thoſe tears that trickle to my ſhame,
Spare me thoſe tears that with grief I or'ecome,
Laſtly ſpare me thoſe ſad diſcourſes which
Do but ſtir up your torments and mine own.
Sev. So ſhall I rob my ſelf of the ſole good
That remains to me.
Paul. Save you from a ſight
Fatall unto us both.
Sev. What recompenſe
Of all my love? what fruit of my devotions?
Paul. That's the ſole remedy that can cure our evils.
Sev. I'le die of mine, Oh love my memory.
Paul. I'le cure mine, they would fully my fair glory.
Sev. Oh! ſince your glory doth pronounce the ſentence,
My griefe muſt yield unto its intereſt,
From ſuch a heart as mine what is't that it
Cannot obtain? you do awake the cares
Which I owe to my glory; farewell, Madam,
I go to ſeek in honourable combats
That immortality which a fair death
Doth give, if I after this mortall ſtroak
Of fate, have life enough to ſeek a death.
Paul. And I, whoſe paniſhment your ſight increaſes,
Intend to avoid it even in Sacrifice,
And alone in my Chamber ſhutting up
My ſorrows, I will make my ſecret Oriſons

Unto the Gods for you.
Sev. May righteous Heaven
Contented with my ruine heap up happineſs
On *Polyenctes* and *Paulina*'s heads.
Paul. May brave *Severus* find after ſo much
Diſaſter, a felicity that may be
Worthy his valour.
Sev. In you he could find it.
Paul. I depend of a Father and a Husband.
Sev. Oh duty that deſtroys, and makes me deſperate!
Adiew too vertuous and too charming object.
Paul. Adiew, adiew, thou too unfortunate
And faithfull lover.

Scena Tertia.

Paulina, *Stratonica*.

Stratonica.
I Have bewail'd you both, and cannot chuſe
But ſhed tears, yet your ſpirit, I do believe,
Is free of fear now, for you plainly ſee
Your dream is vain, *Severus* commeth not
With revenge in his hand.
Paul. Leave me to breath,
At leaſt if thou haſt (as thou ſayſt) lamented me,
Thou call'ſt again my fear unto the Fort
Of all my grief, ſuffer my troubled ſpirits
To take a little reſt, and lead me not
By thoſe redoubled evils.
Strat. What! fear you yet?
Paul. *Stratonica*, I tremble,
And though I am apaid with little juſtice,
This unjuſt fear continually produceth
The Image of the ſad misfortunes which
I ſaw laſt night.
Strat. *Severus* is moſt generous.
Paul. Notwithſtanding
His ſtaydneſs, *Polyenctes* all in bloud
Strikes ſtill my ſight.
Strat. You are your ſelf a witneſs
Of his devotions for him.
Paul. I believe

He would be his ſupport upon occaſion,
But whether this belief be falſe or true,
His abode in this place doth make me fear,
To whatſoe're his vertue may diſpoſe him,
He's ſtrong, he loves, and comes here to eſpouſe me.

Scena Quarta.

Polyeuctes, Nearchus, Paulina, Stratonica.

Polyeuctes.

YOu ſhed too many tears, 'tis time to dry them,
Let your grief ceaſe, and your vain fears fly hence,
You ſee me living, Madam, in deſpight
Of the falſe intimation of your gods.

Paul. The day is long yet, and what moſt affrights me
Is, that the half of the Advertiſement
Is found already true, I did believe
Severus dead, but he was here juſt now.

Pol. I know it, and am nothing troubled at it;
I am in *Militene*, and let *Severus*
Be what he will, your Father doth command here,
And I'm conſiderable. Beſides I'm confident
That from a heart ſo generous as his
A Treaſon cannot ſpring, I was inform'd
He gave a viſit to you, and I'm come
To render him an honour he deſerves.

Paul. He is gone very ſad, and much confounded,
But I've prevailed with him that he will
See me no more.

Pol. How! Madam, d'ee ſuſpect me
Of jealouſie already?

Paul. I ſhould do
Unto all three too ſenſible an injury,
I aſſure my repoſe which his looks trouble;
The firmeſt vertue ſtill avoideth hazards
Wo doth expoſe himſelf to danger, would
Meet with his ruine, and to ſpeak to you
With open ſoul of him, ſince a true merit
Could have inflamed us, his preſence alwaies
Hath right to charm us. Beſides that one muſt

Be

Be out of countenance to leave ones ſelf
To be ſurpris'd, one ſuffers to reſiſt,
One ſuffers to defend, and although vertue
Triumpheth o're theſe fires, the victory
Is painfull and the fight diſhonourable.
Pol. Oh Vertue, if 'twere poſſible, too perfect,
And duty too ſincere! what ſad regrets
'Coſt you *Severus*! how at the expence
Of a fair fire you render me moſt happy!
And to my Amorous heart how ſweet are you!
The more I ſee mine own defects, and do
Contemplate your perfections, the more
I do admire. ———

Polyeuctes, Paulina, Nearchus, Stratonica, Cleon.

Cle. My Lord and Maſter *Felix*
Hath ſent me to deſire you to make haſt
Unto the Temple, for the Victime's choſen,
And all the People on their knees; there wants
But you, Sir, to begin the Sacrifice.
Pol. Go, we will follow thee, will you along, Madam?
Paul. Severus fears my ſight, it ſtirs his flame,
I'le keep my word with him, and will not ſee him;
Adiew, you'l find him there, think of his power,
And the great favour that he hath.
Pol. I fear not
His credit nor his power, and as I know
His generoſity, we ſhall encounter
Each other onely in civility.

Polyeuctes, Nearchus.

Nearc. Where do you think to go?
Pol. Unto the Temple,
Where I am called.
Nearc. What, to joyn your ſelf
To the Devotions of a company
Of Infidels, have you forgot already
That you are Chriſtian?

Pol. You by whom I am ſo,
Do you remember it.
Nearc: I hate falſe Gods.
Pol. And I deteſt them.
Nearc. I do hold their worſhip
Moſt impious,
Pol. And I take it for abominable.
Nearc. Fly then their Altars.
Pol. I will overthrow them,
And in their Temple die, or drive them thence.
My dear *Nearchus*, come, lets brave Idolatry
Before the eys of men, and ſhew us Chriſtians;
Heaven doth expect it, and we muſt perform it:
For my part I do promiſe, and am going
T'accompliſh it: I thank God that hath given me
This opportunity to expreſs my zeal,
Wherein his goodneſs ready even to crown me,
Deigns to approve the faith that he will give me.
Nearc: This zeal, Sir, is too ardent, moderate it.
Pol. We cannot have too much on't for the God
Which we adore.
Nearc. It will procure your death.
Pol. I ſeek it for him.
Nearc. If this heart ſhould ſhake?
Pol. He will be my ſupport.
Nearc. Tis not his pleaſure,
We ſhould precipitate our ſelves therein.
Pol. If we die willingly, the more's our merit.
Nearc. To wait and ſuffer is ſufficient,
We need not ſeek out danger.
Pol. We ſuffer with regret when we dare not
Offer our ſelves.
Nearc. But in this Temple Death
Is moſt aſſured.
Pol. But in Heaven the Palme
Already is prepar'd.
Nearc. A holy life
Muſt merit it.
Pol. Living, perhaps, my crimes
May take it from me, wherefore ſhould we hazzard
What death aſſures us? When ſhe opens heaven,
Can ſhe ſeem hard? I am a Chriſtian,

Nearchus, and I am ſo altogether;
The pure faith which I have receiv'd, aſpires
To its effect; who flies believeth faintly,
And hath but a dead faith.

Nearc. Know that your life
Importeth God himſelf, live to protect
The Chriſtians in this place.

Pol. Th' example of my death will better fortifie them.

Nearc. You will die then?

Pol. And you deſire to live?

Nearc. To tell you truly, I've no mind to follow you.
I fear to fall under the horrour of
The Torments which they will inflict upon us.

Pol. Who goes on boldly needs not fear to fall,
God doth impart at need his infinite force;
Who thinks he ſhall denie him, in his ſoul
He doth deny him, he believs to do't,
And doubteth of his faith.

Nearc. Who feareth nothing
Preſumes too much upon himſelf.

Pol. I expect all things from his grace and mercy,
And nothing from my weakneſs; but in ſtead
Of preſſing me, t'is fit that I preſs you,
Whence doth proceed this coldneſs?

Nearc. God himſelf
Hath feared death.

Pol. He offered himſelf;
Let's follow this divine inſtinct, and raiſe
Altars unto him on the heaps of Idols;
We muſt not (I do remember yet your words)
Neglect to pleaſe him; wife, and wealth, and rank,
We muſt not ſtick t' expoſe our ſelves to dangers,
Yea even to death, to pour our blood forth for him;
Alas! where is that perfect love which you
Wiſhed to me, and which I now wiſh you?
If it remains yet with you, are you not
Jealous that I ſcarce Chriſtian yet, ſhould ſhew it
Stronger then you?

Nearc. You come immediatly
From baptiſm, and the thing that animates you,
It is his grace, which yet no crime in you,
Hath weakened, yet it acteth fully in you.

And to its vehement fire all things ſeem poſſible;
But this ſame grace in me diminiſhed,
And by a thouſand ſins continually
Extenuated, acteth with ſuch faintneſs
In hazardous attempts, that all things ſeem
Impoſſible unto its little vigour;
This baſe effeminacy, and cowardly
Evaſions are the puniſhments which my
Offences do draw on me, but our God,
Whom we muſt ne'r diſtruſt, gives your Example
To fortifie me; Come, dear *Polyeuctes*,
Let us go 'fore the eyes of men to brave
Idolatry, and to ſhew who we are;
May I to ſuffer give you the Example,
As you have given me that of offering you?

Pol. By this moſt happy tranſport which Heaven ſends you,
Again I know *Nearchus*, and I weep
For joy on't, come, let us not loſe more time,
The Sacrifice is ready, let's uphold
Th' intereſt of the true God, lets tread
Under our feet this feigned Thunderbolt,
With which th'abuſed and too credulous people
Arm a corrupted piece of wood; let's go
To make this fatall blindneſs manifeſt,
Thoſe gods of ſtone and mettall, let us break
In pieces, and lets dedicate our days
To this cœleſtiall heat, and ſo let's offer
A triumph unto God; let him diſpoſe
The reſt.

Nearc. Come let us make his glory to break forth
Unto the eyes of all, and for him dye,
Who for us ſuffer'd death and infamy.

The End of the ſecond Act.

Actus

Actus Tertius. Scena Prima.

Paulina alone.

WHat floating cares! what confuſed clouds
Preſent inconſtant images to mine eyes!
Sweet reſt, which I dare not ſo much as hope,
Send thy divine Ray ſpeedily to clear them;
A thouſand diverſe thoughts which my ſad troubles
Produce in my uncertain heart, are loſt
In wiſhes; no hope flatters me, not where
I dare perſiſt, no fear affrights me not
Where I dare fix my ſelf, my ſpirit imbracing
All what it doth imagine, would ſometimes
My happineſs, and ſometimes my deſtruction;
Both one and tother ſtrike it with ſo little
Effect, that it can neither hope nor fear.
Continually *Severus* troubleth
My fantaſie, my hope is in his vertue,
I fear his jealouſie; and I cannot think
That *Polyeuctes* with an equal eye
Can ſee his Rivall heer; as between ſuch
The hate is natural, the interview
Soon endeth in a quarrel; the one ſees
In the hands of the other what he thinks
He meriteth, the other ſees a deſperate
Would take it from him; whatſoe'r high reaſon
Raignsin their courage, th'one conceiveth envy,
The other jealouſie: the ſhame of an
Affront, which each of them feareth to ſee,
Either receiv'd of old, or at this preſent,
Deſtroying all their patience from the firſt,
Forms choler and diſtruſt, and ſeiſing on
The Husband and the Lover both together,
Whether they will or no delivers them
Over to their reſentment, and their paſſion:
But what a ſtrange Chymera do I fancy
Unto my ſelf! and what an injury
Do I to *Polyeuctes* and *Severus*?

As if the vertue of theſe famous Rivals
Could not triumph over thoſe common evils.
The minds of both, Miſtreſſes to themſelves
Are of too high an order for ſuch baſeneſs;
They ſhall ſee one another in the Temple
Like generous men; but alas, ſtill I fear:
What is th'advantage that my Husband hath
To be in *Militene*, if *Severus* arm
The Roman Eagle 'gainſt him, if my Father
Command here, and doth fear this Favorite,
And doth repent already of his choice?
The little hope I have is with conſtraint,
And born it is abortive, and gives place
To fear; what ought to fix it, doth but ſerve
To diſſipate it. Gods! grant that my fear
Be falſe, and my ſad fancy, a Chimere.

Scena Secunda.

Paulina, *Stratonica*.

Paulina.

BUt let us underſtand the Iſſue on't.
Now my *Stratonica* what's the concluſion
Of this great Sacrifice.

Strat. Alas *Paulina!*

Paul. Have my Prayers and Devotions been fruſtrate?
I ſee an ill ſign of it in thy face,
Have they unfortunately quarrelled?

Strat. *Nearchus*, *Polyeuctes*, and the Chriſtians ——

Paul. Speak then, the Chriſtians.

Strat. I cannot ſpeak.

Paul. Thou doſt prepare my ſoul for ſtrange afflictions.

Strat. You ne'r could have a juſter cauſe of grief.

Paul. What have they murthered him?

Strat. That had been nothing
Your dream is all true, *Polyeuctes* is
No more.

Paul. What is he dead?

Strat. No, he lives, but
(O fate to be lamented!) this great courage,
This divine ſoul is no more worthy of

The

The light, nor of *Paulina*, he is no more
That Spouſe ſo charming to your eyes, he is
The common enemy of the gods, and State,
An infamous, a Rebel, a perfidious,
A Traytor, Villain; a baſe Parricide,
An execrable plague to all good men,
An impious and a ſacrilegious Wretch,
In a word, Madam, he's a Chriſtian.
Paul. This word would have ſuffic'd without that torrent
Of Injuries.
Strat. Can there be any titles bad enough
For Chriſtians?
Paul. He is what thou ſayſt, if he
Imbrace their faith, but he's my Husband, and
Thou ſpeak'ſt to me;
Strat. Conſider him no more
Then the God he adoreth.
Paul. I have lov'd him
With duty, and this duty ſtill continues.
Strat. At preſent he doth give you cauſe to hate him
Who doth betray the gods, would make no ſcruple
To betray you.
Paul. Although he ſhould betray me,
Yet I ſhould love him. And if thou, *Stratonica*,
Doſt wonder at this love, know, that my duty
Dependeth not of his, let him fail in it,
(If he be ſo diſpos'd) I will do mine.
What if he lov'd elſewhere, ſhould his example
Perſwade me to imbrace unlawfull heats?
Let him be Chriſtian, I'm not troubled at it.
I love his Perſon, and I hate his errour.
But what reſentment hath my Father of it?
Strat. A ſecret rage, and an exceſs of choler
Poſſeſſeth him, though yet for *Polyeuctes*
He ſhews ſome; he'll not let his juſtice
Fall upon him before the puniſhment
Of falſe *Nearchus* be preſented to him
To ſee how that will work upon his ſpirits.
Paul. What is *Nearchus* Chriſtian too?
Strat. 'Twas he
Seduced him; ſee the unworthy fruit
Of their old amity; this perfidious

Taking him lately from us 'gainſt his will,
Drew him to baptiſm: now you have the ſecret
That ſeemed ſo myſterious, which your love
Could not draw from him.

Paul. Thou didſt blame me then
For being too unfortunate.

Strat. I foreſaw not
Such a misfortune.

Paul. Ere I will give up
My ſoul unto my griefs, I'le try the force
Of my laments, in quality of Wife
And Daughter. I hope to perſwade a husband,
And pacifie a Father: if I fail
With both of them, I'le take no other Counſel
But what deſpair ſhall give me: tell me now
What did they in the Temple?

Strat. The impiety
They acted there was ſuch as 'tis without
Example, I can't think on't without trembling:
And fear, I ſhould commit a crime but in
Relating it; in few words underſtand
Their beaſtly inſolence. Scarce had the Prieſt
Obtained ſilence, and towards the Eaſt
Setled his countenance, but their ſmall reſpect
Appeared plainly, both of them expreſs'd
Their madneſs at the ceremony, they mock'd
Aloud the ſacred myſteries, and deſpis'd
The gods that were invoked; all the people
Murmur'd thereat, and *Felix* was offended;
But both of them carrying themſelves with more
Irreverence, what, ſaid *Polyeuctes*, raiſing
His voice, adore you gods of ſtone or wood?
Diſpence me from recital of the blaſphemies
They vomited 'gainſt *Jupiter* himſelf.
Adultery and Inceſt were the leaſt
Crimes they objected to him. Hearken *Felix*.
Purſued he, and hearken all ye people;
The God of *Polyeuctes* and *Nearchus*
Is abſolute Monarch both of heaven and earth,
Of Deſtiny ſole Maſter, and the only
Being that's independent, ſubſtance which
Never receiveth change; it is the God

The Chriſtians adore that we muſt thank
For victories he gave the Emperour *Decius*;
He in his hands holds the ſucceſs of battels,
With him are (ſaith the ſacred Text) the iſſues
Of life and death, his power, his infinit goodneſs,
His juſtice is immenſe, 'tis he alone
That puniſheth, alone that recompenceth;
You vainly do adore impuiſſant Monſters.
Caſting themſelves at theſe words on the wine
And Incenſe, after they had thrown againſt
The earth the holy veſſels without fear
Of *Felix*, or of Thunder, with like fury
They ran unto the Altar. Heavens! was ever
The like ſeen? there you might behold the ſtatue
Of the chief god o'rethrown by impious hands
Lye at their feet, the myſteries diſturb'd,
The Temple ſacrilegionſly profan'd,
The fi ght and clamours of a mutinous people,
That fear' the anger of offended heaven.
Felix. —— but here he comes; the reſt he'll tell you.
Paul. How ſullen is his countenance and full
Of trouble! he expreſſeth much of ſadneſs
And indignation.

Scena Tertia.

Felix, Paulina, Stratonica.

Felix.
DUrſt ſuch an inſolence
appear! in publick too, and in my ſight?
He ſhall die for't, the Traytor.
Paul. Suffer me
T'embrace your knees.
Fel. I ſpeak not of your Husband,
But of *Nearchus*, *Polyeuctes* hath
Too near relation to me, though his crime
Deſerves no favour, to be baniſhed
My love for ever.
Paul. I cou'd not expect
Leſs from a Fathers goodneſs.
Fel. I could ſacrifice him

To my juſt anger, for you are not ignorant
To what a height of horror the blind fury
Of his impiety hath boldly mounted,
You might have underſtood it from *Stratonica*.
Paul. I know tis fit he ſee *Nearchus* puniſh'd.
Felix. Hereafter he ſhall better be inſtructed
In taking Counſell, when he ſhall behold
Him puniſh'd that ſeduc'd him to this evill;
The bloudy ſpectacle of a friend, whom he
Muſt follow, will ſo work upon his ſoul
That he'l repent his wickedneſs, and renounce
His new faith, an example more prevails
Then Threatning; this mad heat will ſuddenly
Turn into ice, cheer up your drooping ſpirits.
Paul. You hope then that his courage will come down?
Felix. He ſhould be wiſe, ſure, at *Nearchus* coſt.
Paul. He ſhould be ſo, but alas! I do fear
There muſt be time to work it, may I hope
T' obtain this favour from your goodneſs, Sir?
Felix. I do him too much favour in conſenting
That he ſhall lie upon a quick repentance:
Like puniſhment is due to like offences,
Yet I have put a difference between
Theſe two equally guilty, and thereby
Betrayed Juſtice to paternall love,
I've made my ſelf a Criminall for him,
And did expect from you more thanks then plaints.
Paul. Firſt give me, then I'le thank you; I know well
The honour, and the ſpirit of a Chriſtian;
He doth continue obſtinate to the end,
He'l dye before he will repent.
Felix. His pardon
Is in his hand, let him conſider on't.
Paul. Give it him fully.
Felix. He may finiſh it.
Paul. Give him not over to the furies of
His ſect.
Felix. I'le give him up unto the Laws,
Which I ought to reſpect.
Paul. Is this all the ſupport a Son-in-Law
May hope for from the Father of his Wife?
Felix. Let him do for himſelf as much as I

Have done for him.

Paul. Alas! Sir, he is blind.

Felix. It pleaſeth him to be ſo, he that cheriſheth
His errour never will acknowledge it.

Paul. In the name of the gods. ——

Felix. Invoke them not.
The intereſt of the gods requires his death.

Paul. They hear our prayers.

Felix. Well then, Petition them.

Paul. In the name of the Emperour whoſe place
You hold.

Felix. 'Tis true, his power is in my hand,
But if he hath committed it unto me
'Tis to diſplay it 'gainſt his enemies.

Paul. Is *Polyeuctes* ſo?

Felix. All Chriſtians are
Rebels.

Paul. Hear not theſe cruel maximes for him.
In marrying *Paulina* he's become
Part of your bloud.

Felix. I look upon his fault,
Not on his quality, where a crime againſt
The State, is mingled with black ſacriledge,
Nor amity nor blood have any priviledge.

Paul. Exceſs of rigour!

Felix. Leſs then his offence.

Paul. Oh effect too true of my fearfull dream!
Know, that with him, Sir, you deſtroy your daughter.

Felix. My Family is not ſo dear to me
As the gods and the Emperour, are honour'd.

Paul. Cannot the ruine of us both arreſt you?

Felix. I fear the gods add *Decius* both together;
But we need doubt no ſad thing yet; think you
He will perſiſt in his blind error? if
He ſeemed to us to run to his misfortune,
It was but the firſt heat of a new Chriſtian.

Paul. If yet you love him, have not that opinion
That he will change belief twice in a day:
The Chriſtians are more conſtant, you expect,
I doubt too much Legerity from him;
'Tis not an errour ſuck'd in with the milk,
That his ſoul hath imbrac'd without examining:

No,

No, *Polyeuctes* is a Chriſtian,
Becauſe he would be ſo, and brought with him
Unto the Temple a reſolved ſpirit.
You may preſume of him as of the reſt,
Death's neither fatal to them, nor diſhonorable.
They ſeek for glory in deſpiſing of
The gods, for earth blind, they aſpire to heaven;
And thinking that death opens them the gate,
Torment, diſmember, murther them, they care not;
Tortures and racks are the ſame unto them
That pleaſures are to us, and bring them to
The Butt where their deſires and wiſhes tend;
They call the cruel'ſt and moſt infamous death
Sweet Martyrdome.
Felix. Well, *Polyeuctes* then
Shall have what he deſires, no more of him.
Paul. My Father.

Scena Quarta.

Felix, *Albin*, *Paulina*, *Stratonica*.

Felix.
IS it done, *Albin*?
Alb. Yes Sir, and *Nearchus*
Hath paid for his fault.
Fel. And *Polyeuctes*
Hath ſeen him?
Alb. Yes, but with an envious eye;
He was on fire to follow him, far from
Retreating, and his heart was firmly fix'd,
In ſtead of being ſhaken.
Paul. Oh! my Father,
I to'd you ſo; once more I do beſeech you,
If ever my reſpects gave you content
If you eſteem'd them, if you ever lov'd them. ——
Fel. Paulina, you love an unworthy husband
Too much.
Paul. I had him from your hand, my love
Is without crime, he was your worthy choice,
And for him I have quench'd the faireſt fires
That e're were kindled in a heart; I beg
In the name of that blind and quick obedience,

Which

Which I have always rendred to my duty,
Since you had all power on me and my love,
That I at my turn now may prevail with you.
By this juſt power too much now to be fear'd,
By thoſe fair ſentiments which I muſt ſmother,
Take not your preſents from me, they are dear
Unto mine eyes, and have coſt me too much
Not to be precious to me.

Fel. You are troubleſome.

Paul. Good gods! what do I hear!

Fel. I love not pitty
But at the rate I would receive thereof,
To touch me with't whether I will or no
By ſo many vain trials, is to loſe
Time and your tears, only to anger me:
You gave it me, but you muſt underſtand
I diſavow it when you ſnatch it from me:
Prepare to ſee this miſerable Chriſtian,
And uſe your beſt endeavour to perſwade him,
When I have uſed mine; go, and no more
Provoke a Father that doth love you tenderly:
See if you can by your perſwaſions gain
Your Husband to himſelf, preſently
I'le cauſe him to come hither, in the mean time
Leave us, I'le try what my diſcourſe can do.

Paul. Suffer, I do beſeech you. ——

Fel. Once again
Leave me alone your griefoffendeth me
Aſmuch as it afflicts me, all your induſtry
Muſt be apply'd to gain you *Polyeuctes*,
The leſs you do importune me, the more
You ſhall advance.

Scena Quinta.

Felix, *Albin.*

Felix.

Albin, how died he?

Alb. Like a Beaſt, like an impious deſperate wretch
In braving torments, in deſpiſing death,
Without regret, aſtoniſhment, or murmur,
In obſtination, and inſenſibility;

Laſtly, he dyed like a Chriſtian
With blaſphemy in's mouth.
Fel. What did the other?
Alb. I have told you already, nothing touch'd him,
So far was he from being dejected at it,
That his heart grew more lofty: they enforc'd him
To quit the Scaffold: he is now in Priſon.
Where I ſaw him conducted; are you ready
To entertain diſcourſe with him a little?
Fel. Oh! how unfortunate am I?
Alb. You are
Lamented every where.
Fel. None know the evils
Wherewith my heart's oppreſs'd, thoughts upon thoughts
Trouble my ſoul, cares upon cares diſturb it:
I find that love and hate, that fear and hope,
That joy and grief by turns, preſſe and provoke it,
I enter into ſentiments that paſs
Belief. I have ſome that are violent,
And others that are pitifull, ſome generous
Which dare not act, and likewiſe ſome ignoble
Which make me bluſh. I love that wretched man
Whom I choſe for my Son-in-Law, I hate
The blind and dangerous error he is in;
I do deplore his loſs, and being willing
To ſave him, I muſt look too on the gods,
Whoſe injur'd glory I muſt vindicate:
I fear their thunderbolts and *Decius* wrath;
It is my charge, my life depends upon it.
Thus ſometimes for him I expoſe my ſelf
To death, and other times I expoſe him
To ſave my ſelf.
Alb. Sure *Decius* will excuſe
A Father's amity, beſides *Polyeuctes*
Is of a blood that ſhould be reverenc'd.
Fel. His order for the puniſhment o' th' Chriſtians
Is very rigorous, and the more th' example
Is great, the more 'tis dangerous and dreadfull.
There's no diſtinction when th'offence is publick;
When we connive at a domeſtick crime,
By what authority, by what Law can we
Puniſh that in another which we ſuffer

Amongſt

Amongſt our ſelves?

Alb. If you dare not to have
Regard unto his perſon, write to *Decius*
That he ordain his pardon.

Fel. Should I do ſo,
Severus would deſtroy me, tis his hate
And power that make my greateſt care, if I
Should but defer to puniſh ſuch a crime,
Though he be generous, though he be magnanimous,
He is a man, and ſenſible, and I
Diſdain'd him formerly, his ſpirit offended
With thoſe receiv'd contempts, and deſperate
Through th'unexpected marriage of *Paulina*,
Will from the anger of the Emperour
Obtain my ruine. Every thing ſeems lawfull
To revenge an affront, and opportunity
Tempteth the moſt remiſs, perhaps (and this
Suſpition is not without ſome apparence)
He in his heart conceives again ſome hope,
And thinking to ſee *Polyeuctes* puniſh'd
Recals a love with much pain baniſhed:
Judge if his anger in this caſe implacable
Would hould me innocent to ſave a Criminal,
And if he'd ſpare me, ſeeing his deſignes
Twice made abortive by me. Shall I tell thee
A baſe, unworthy, and low ſpirited thought?
I ſmother it, it ſprings up again, it flatters,
And angers me, ambition ſtill preſents it
Unto me, and all that I can do is
But to deteſt it; *Polyeuctes* here
Is the prop of my Family, but if
The other by his death eſpouſe my daughter,
I ſhould acquire greater advantages,
Which would raiſe me a thouſand times more high
Then now I am. My heart thereat by force
Takes a malignant joy, but rather let
Heaven ſtrike me with a Thunder-bolt, then that
I ſhould conſent unto ſo baſe a thought,
Which hitherto my glory hath bely'd.

Alb. Your heart is too good, and your ſoul too high;
But d'ee reſolve to puniſh this offence?

Fel. I'le uſe all my endeavour to ſubdue

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Which dare not act, and likewiſe ſome ignoble
Which make me bluſh. I love that wretched man
Whom I choſe for my Son-in-Law, I hate
The blind and dangerous error he is in;
I do deplore his loſs, and being willing
To ſave him, I muſt look too on the gods,
Whoſe injur'd glory I muſt vindicate:
I fear their thunderbolts and *Decius* wrath;
It is my charge, my life depends upon it.
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I ſhould conſent unto ſo baſe a thought,
Which hitherto my glory hath bely'd.

Alb. Your heart is too good, and your ſoul too high;
But d'ee reſolve to puniſh this offence?

Fel. I'le uſe all my endeavour to ſubdue

His errour by the fear of death, but if
I can't prevail, then I will afterward
Imploy *Paulina's* power.
Alb. What will you do
At laſt, if he continue obſtinate?
Fel. Preſs me not on that point in ſuch diſpleaſure,
I can't reſolve, and know not what to chuſe.
Alb. Sir, like a faithfull ſervant I am bound
T'advertiſe you that the Town murmureth
In his behalfe already, and is even
Upon the point to mutiny, if you
Proceed againſt him further. I perceive
Th' Inhabitants are all reſolv'd t'oppoſe you,
And will not ſee their laſt hope, and the blood
Of their Kings paſs the rigour o' the Laws:
Beſides his priſon is not very ſafe.
I left about it but a pittifull troop,
I fear they will be forc'd.
Fel. Then take him thence,
And bring him here, where we'l be ſure of him.
Alb. Then take him hence your ſelf, and with a hope
Of pardon, pacifie the fury of
The multitude.
Fel Come let us go, and if
He ſtill perſiſt to remain Chriſtian,
We will diſpoſe of him, and carry't ſo
That what's reſolv'd upon, they ſhall not know.

The End of the third Act.

Actus Quartus. Scena Prima.

Polyeuctes, Cleon, three other Guards.

Polyeuctes.

WHat would you with me, Guards?
Cle. Paulina, Sir,
Would ſpeak with you.
Pol. Oh how I dread her preſence!
This combat will be hard; *Felix.* o're thee
I triumphed in Priſon, and deſpis'd

Thy

Thy threatning, I beheld thee without fear;
I see, that to revenge thy self thou tak'st
Stronger a mes then thine own her tears do terrifie
More then thy Executioners; O Lord,
Thou seest here the danger that I run,
In this my pressing need double thy force;
And thou my dear *Nearchus*, comming forth
Lately from a Triumphant victory,
Look on my travels from thy glorious residence,
Lend me thy hand from Heaven to overcome
So strong an Enemy. Guards, dare you doo me
One civil office?

Cle. Sir, we have strict order
To render you no service.

Pol. You mistake me,
I have no purpose to apply my self
Unto you as a means for my escape,
But I desire that one of you (three being
Sufficient to guard me) would oblige me
To seek *Severus*, and intreat him here;
This might be done with safety, I presume.
If I could tell him an important secret,
He would injoy more happiness, and I
Should dye content.

Cle. Since it is for *Severus*,
I will dispence with all things.

Pol. He himself
Will recompence thy pains, if I should fail.
The sooner that thou go'st, the better 'tis,
Dispatch.

Cle I fly, and you shall have me here
In less time then a moment. —— *Exit Cleon.*

Scena Secunda.

Polyeuctes *alone*, *his Guards being retired to the corners of the Stage.*

DElicious Spring of love, yet fruitfull still
In misery, of me what is your will?
Ye flattering pleasures, baits of flesh and blood,
Why fly you not, since I esteem you mud?

Vanish

Vaniſh vain honours, worldly glory paſs,
Which ſhines, and is as brittle too as glaſs:
Hope not that I'le ſigh after you at all,
It is in vain your weak charms to eſtall.
Why ſhew you me Gods enemies in ſtate
And flouriſhing? he doth reſerve a fate
That ſhall confound thoſe great ones, and the ſword
Suſpended o're their heads, at his leaſt word
Shall fall on them, ſo much more heavily,
As that they dream't not of their miſery.
Thou cruel Tiger *Decius* that doſt thirſt
For blood, thou ſhalt be glutted till thou burſt:
That God, which we adore, hath for a while
Permitted thee, wild forreſt Boar, to ſpoil
His lovely Vineyard, but thy fearfull fate
Draws near which will thy glory terminate.
The Scythian comes like an impetuous flood,
To revenge Chriſtian and Perſian blood:
A little yet, and then thy hour is come,
When thou ſhalt ſleep until the day of doom
In body, not in mind, out of the name
Of Chriſtian, that is fed ſtill with a flame,
Which never dies. Nothing can warrant thee,
The thunder's ready in the cloud, I ſee,
And will no longer hold in expectation
Of thy repentance, wretch in obſtination!
In the mean time let *Felix* ſacrifice
Me to thy rage, my Rivall blind his eyes,
And make himſelf his Son-in-Law, I yield
Unto my loſs, rather I win the field:
Vain baits, I ſlight you and deſpiſe your art,
For in this Chriſtian and Regenerate heart,
I feel a divine flame, whoſe Ray will dim
Paulina's beauty in her brighteſt trim.
I look upon her now but as a toy
That would detain me from my heavenly joy.
Adoreable *Idea's*, ſweets above
You fill a heart that's capable to love;
The ſouls Poſſeſſed with your ſacred fire
Fix there, and firmly ſettle their deſire
Never to change; you promiſe, and give more,
Your benefits do ſtill increaſe your ſtore:

The happy death which I expect, to me
Is a ſweet paſſage to eternity.
'Tis you, O divine flame, which nothing can
Extinguiſh, that make me more then a man
Look on *Paulina*'s face, and never fear;
Her aſſaults and temptations I can bear;
I ſee her, but my heart inflamed now
With holy zeal, to her charms cannot bow,
And my eyes cleared with celeſtiall light,
Hers appear clouded in a vail of night.

Scena Tertia.

Polyeuctes, *Paulina*, Guards.

Polyeuctes.

MAdam, what's the deſign that brings you hither?
Is it to fight me, or to ſecond me?
And the fair proffer of this perfect love
Comes it to aid me, or to overthrow me?
Bring you here with you hate, or amity
As enemy, or as my deareſt moyety?

Paul. You have no enemy here, Sir, but your ſelf
Every one loves you, none but *Polyeuctes*
Hateth your vertue, it is he alone
That executes my dream, do not deſtroy
Your ſelf, and you are ſafe; how great ſoe'r
Your crime be, you are innocent, if you grant
A pardon to your ſelf; deign to conſider
The blood from whence y'are ſprung, your noble actions,
Your rare endowments; think, Sir, that you are
Belov'd by all the people, favoured of
The Prince, and Son-in-law unto the Governour
Of the whole Province, the name of my Husband
I reckon t'ee as nothing, that's a happineſs
Onely for me, which is not great for you;
But after your exploits, after your birth,
After your power, look upon our hope,
And give not up unto the hangmans hand
What to our juſt deſires ſo fair a fortune
Doth promiſe.

Pol. I conſider more, and know

My

My advantages, and the hope which on them
Great courages do frame, they aſpire not
But unto tranſitory good, which cares
Diſturb, which dangers follow, and which death
Takes from us, fortune makes her ſport with them,
To day th' throne, to morrow in the dirt.
Their greateſt glory never is without
Some diſcontent, few of our *Cæſars* have
Injoy'd it long, this greatneſs periſheth;
I have ambition too, but mine's more fair
And noble, for I ſeek immortall glory,
A happineſs aſſur'd that hath no end
Nor meaſure, far above the reach of envy,
Or deſtiny; and is a ſorry life
Too dear a purchaſe for it, which immediatly
May be tane from me, which makes me injoy
But even the flying inſtant, and's not able
T'aſſure me that which follows?

Paul. See the dotage,
And the ridiculous dreams of you fond Chriſtians;
Behold how their lies have ſeduced you!
You think that all your blood is not enough
For a felicity ſo ſweet; but, Sir,
This blood is not yours to diſpoſe of it;
You have not life as an inheritance,
The day that gives it you at the ſame time
Engageth it, you owe it to the Prince,
Unto the Publick, to the State.

Pol. I would
Loſe it for them in honourable fight,
I know what is the happineſs thereof,
And what's the glory, you do boaſt the memory
Of *Decius* Anceſtors, and this name yet precious
Unto you Romans, put into his hands
At the end of ſix hundred years the Empire.
I owe my life unto the peoples good,
To the Prince and his crown, but I do owe it
Much more unto the God that gave it me:
If to dye for ones Prince be held to be
A glorious fate, when one dies for his God
How ſhall his death be crown'd?

Paul. What God?

Pol.

Pol. Peace, *Paulina*,
He hears your words, for he is not a God
Like your falſe gods, inſenſible and deaf,
Weak, made of wood, of marble, or of gold,
Even as you pleaſe: he is the God o'th' Chriſtians,
He is mine, he is yours, the heaven and earth
Acknowledge him, who made both them and us.
Paul. Adore him then in mind, and outwardly
Expreſs it not.
Pol. Oh no! I ſhould be then
Idolater, and Chriſtian both together.
Paul. Diſſemble for a moment till *Severus*
Be gone, and let my Fathers goodneſs work.
Pol. The goodneſs of my God is to be cheriſh'd
Much more, he doth remove me from the dangers
I would have run into, and without ſuffering
Me to look back, his Favour crowneth me
Entring in the career, with the firſt wind
He brings me to the Port, and comming forth
From baptiſm, he doth ſend me unto death.
If you could comprehend the little worth
Of this frail life, and the eternal ſweets
That follow after death —— But to what end
Is it to ſpeak of thoſe concealed treaſures
To ſouls whom God hath not inſpired yet:
Paul. Cruel! for it is time my grief break forth,
And that a juſt reproach oppreſs a ſoul
Ingratefull; Is this that fair fire thou boaſts of?
Are theſe thy oaths? expreſſeſt thou for me
The ſmalleſt ſentiments? I ſpeak not to thee
Of that deplorable eſtate, wherein
Thy death will leave thy poor diſconſolate Wife,
I think that love ſhould ſpeak enough of that:
But that love ſo firm and ſo well deſerv'd
Which thou didſt promiſe me, and I bare thee,
When thou wilt leave me, when thou mak'ſt me dye,
Can it not draw one ſigh, one tear from thee?
Ingratefull, thou doſt quit me, yea, with joy,
Thou hid'ſt it not, but wilt that I ſhould ſee it,
And thy hard heart inſenſible to my ſad
Attractions, figureth unto it ſelf,
A happineſs that I ſhall never ſee;

Is it then the diſguſt that Marriage brings?
Am I grown odious after having given
My ſelf unto you?
Pol. Alas!
Paul. How that alas came hardly forth!
Yet if it happily ſhew'd any ſign
Of a repentance, Oh how charming were it
Although inforc'd! but courage, he is mov'd,
I ſee he ſheds tears.
Pol. True, I weep, *Paulina*,
And would to God that therewith this heard heart
Might happily be pierc'd, the ſad eſtate
Wherein I leave you doth deſerve the plaints
My love doth give me, and if one can carry
Griefs unto Heaven, I carry them to ſee
The exceſs of your misfortunes; but if in
This luminous abode of higheſt glory,
This God all juſt and good, allow my Prayer,
If He vouchſafe to lend an ear unto
Conjugall love, He will diſplay his light
Upon your blindneſs; Lord, I do beſeech thee
Let me obtain this of thy goodneſs, ſhe
Hath too much vertue not to be a Chriſtian,
It pleaſed thee to give her too much merit,
Not to know Thee, and to adhere unto Thee,
To live ſtill an unfortunate Slave of hell,
And to die as ſhe's born under that yoak.
Paul. What ſay'ſt thou, miſerable, what dar'ſt thou wiſh?
Pol. That which with all my blood I fain would purchaſe.
Paul. That rather. ———
Pol. Tis in vain to make reſiſtance,
This God toucheth the heart when leaſt we think on't;
That happy moment is not yet arriv'd,
It will come, but the time's not known unto me.
Paul. Leave this Chymera, come and love me ſtill.
Pol. I love you much more then my ſelf, but, pardon me,
Leſs then my God.
Paul. In the name of that love,
Forſake me not.
Pol. In the name of that love,
Follow my ſteps.
Paul. Doſt thou not care to quit me, wilt thou then

Seduce

Seduce me?

Pol. Car'ſt thou not to go to Heaven?
I will conduct you there.

Paul. Imaginations!

Pol. Cœleſtiall truths.

Paul. Strange blindneſs.

Pol. Rather everlaſting lights.

Paul. Thou prefer'ſt death before *Paulina's* love.

Pol. You the baſe world before the divine goodneſs.

Paul. Go, cruell, go and die, thou never lov'dſt me.

Pol. Live happy in the World, and ſuffer me
To die in peace.

Paul. Yes, I will leave thee, trouble not thy ſelf,
I go ——

Scena Quarta.

Polyeuctes, Paulina, Severus, Fabian, Guards.

Paulina.

BUt what deſign *Severus* brings you here?
Is this done like a generous Cavaleer
To come to brave here one in miſery?

Pol. *Paulina*, you treat ill ſo rare a merit,
At my ſole prayer he renders me this viſit.
I have committed incivility,
Noble *Severus*, which I know you'l pardon,
And impute to my want of liberty.
Being poſſeſſor of a Treaſure which
I was not worthy of, before I die
Suffer me to reſign it unto you,
And to leave the rar'ſt vertue that a Woman
Could e're receive from heaven unto the hands
Of the moſt valiant and accompliſh'd man
The earth hath honour'd, or *Rome* hath produc'd.
Y'are worthy of her, ſhe is worthy you:
Refuſe her not, Sir, from a Husbands hand;
If he hath diſ-united you, his death
Will make amends, and joyn you both again:
Let not a fire which ſometimes was ſo fair,
Become leſs now, give her your heart, and take
Her faith to you, live happily together,

And dye like me, it is the glorious good
Which *Polyeuctes* wiſheth to you both:
Guards, lead me to my death, I've nothing more
To ſay; come, all is finiſh'd.

Scena Quinta.

Severus, Paulina, Fabian.

Severus.

I Am confounded
In my aſtoniſhment to ſee his blindneſs;
His reſolution's ſo unparalel'd,
That ſcarce can I believe mine ears; a heart
That holds you dear, (but what heart is ſo low
That could have known you, and not cheriſh'd you?)
A man belov'd by you, aſſoon as he
Poſſeſſeth you, without regret he leaves you,
Nay he doth more, he doth reſign you over;
And as if your fires were a fatall preſent,
He himſelf makes a gift on't to his Rivall:
Surely the Chriſtians either have ſtrange whimſies,
Or their felicities muſt be infinite,
Since to pretend thereto they dare reject
What one ſhould purchaſe at an Empires price.
For my part, if my deſtiny a little
Sooner propitious, had been pleas'd to honour me
With your fair Nuptials, I ſhould have ador'd
No glory but the luſtre of your eyes;
I would have made of them my Kings and gods.
They ſhould have firſt reduced me to duſt,
Before that ——

Paul. Sir, no more of this diſcourſe,
I fear I've heard too much, and that this heat
Should thruſt forth ſome unſeemly conſequence
Unworthy of us both. *Severus*, know
My *Polyeuctes* wholy doth take up
Paulina's thoughts, he hath but a ſhort moment
To live, you are the innocent cauſe thereof:
I know not if your ſoul might have preſum'd
To frame ſome hope to your deſires upon
His ruine, but aſſure your ſelf, there is

No

No death ſo cruel whereunto I would not
With fearleſs ſteps addreſs, nor in Hell horrors
So dreadfull which I would not rather ſuffer,
Then ſully my fame to eſpouſe a man,
After his ſad fate, who in any kind
Might cauſe his death, and if you ſhould believe me
Of ſo unſound a mind, the Love I bear you
Would turn all into hatred; you are generous,
Be ſo unto the end; My Father is
In a condition to deny you nothing;
He fears you, and I will be bold to adde
This word, that if he doth deſtroy my Husband,
It is to you he ſacrificeth him;
Save this unfortunate, uſe your intereſt for him,
Indeavour, pray, to ſerve him as a Prop;
I know tis much what I demand of you,
But how much greater the indeavour is,
So much more is the glory on't, preſerve
A Rivall that you'r jealous of, it is
A tract of vertue which belongeth not
But unto you; if this be not ſufficient
Renown unto you, tis much that a woman
Sometimes belov'd, and yet perhaps whoſe love
May touch you, ſhould owe that to your great heart
Which ſhe eſteems moſt dear. Laſtly, remember
You are *Severus*, after this Petition
I'le go without an Anſwer, and if you
Be not the ſame which Ile preſume to vaunt,
To prize you ſtill, I will be ignorant. —— *Exit.*

Scena Sexta.

Severus, Fabian.

Severus.

Fabian, What feel I? what new clap of Thunder
Falls on my fortune, and reduceth it
To duſt? the more I do eſteem it near
The farther 'tis, I find all loſt, when I
Think all is gain'd, and envious Deſtiny
Reſolv'd to hurt me ſtill, cuts off my hope
As ſoon as it is born. Before I offer

My

My fair devotions, I receive refuſals,
Sad alwaies and aſham'd to ſee that baſely
It durſt ſpring up again, that yet more baſely
It durſt appear, and laſtly that a Woman
In an afflicted ſtate ſhould give me leſſons
Of generoſity. Your fair ſoul, *Paulina*,
Is as high as it is unfortunate,
But tis as cruel too as generous,
And your griefs tyrann ze with too much rigour
Upon a Lovers heart that's wholely yours.
Tis not enough to loſe you then, unleſs
I give you, I muſt ſerve a Rivall when
He doth abandon you, and by a cruell
And generous triall, to give you unto him,
Muſt ſnatch him from his death.

Fab. Leave this ingratefull family to their fate,
Let it accord the father with the Daughter,
The Husband with the Wife, and *Polyeuctes*,
With *Felix*; What reward hope you to have
For ſuch a cruel triall?

Sev. Only *Fabian*,
The glory to ſhew to this beauteous ſoul,
Severus equals her, and doth deſerve her,
That ſhe was due unto me, and that Heaven,
In taking her from me was too injurious.

Fab. Without accuſing Heaven, or Deſtiny
Think on the danger you draw on upon you
By ſuch an Act, you hazard very much;
Conſider well, you enterpriſe to ſave
A Chriſtian, you cannot be ignorant
What is, and always was the hate of *Decius*
Unto that impious Sect; tis unto him
A crime ſo great, ſo capitall, that even
To you his only Favourite may be fatall.

Sev. This were good counſel for ſome common ſoul,
Though he hold in his hand my life and fortune,
I am *Severus* ſtill, and all this great
And mighty power can nothing on my glory,
Nothing upon my duty; honour here
Obligeth me and I will ſatisfie it;
Let fortune afterward ſhew her ſelf kind
Or cruel, as her nature's ſtill inconſtant,

Dying

Dying in glory I ſhall dye content:
I'le tell thee more, but with ſome confidence,
The Chriſtian Sect is not the ſame we take it,
We hate them, and the reaſon for't I know not,
And I can ſee *Decius* unjuſt in nothing
But in this point; for curioſity
I fain would know them; they are held for Sorcerers,
Whoſe Maſter Hell is, and on this belief
The ſecret myſteries, which we are not able
To underſtand, are puniſhed with death:
But *Ceres*, *Eleuſina*, and the goddeſs
Bonna at *Rome*, and in *Greece* have their ſecrets
Like them; we ſuffer likewiſe in all places
All kind of gods, their God only excepted:
All the Ægyptian Monſters haue their Temple
In *Rome*; our predeceſſors, as they lik'd,
Made a god of a man, and their blood with us
Retaining ſtill their errors, we fill Heaven
With all our Emperors; but to ſpeak truly
Of ſo much Apothæſis, the effect
Is very doubtfull of theſe Metamorphoſes:
The Chriſtians have but one God, abſolute Maſter
Of all, whoſe only will doth execute
What he reſolves, but if I durſt to ſpeake
Between us what I think, ours very often,
Me thinks, agree together very ill,
And ſhould their anger cruſh me 'fore thine eyes,
I muſt ſpeak this, we have too many of them
To be true gods. Perhaps theſe publick faiths
Are but inventions of wiſe Polyticks,
To keep the People under, and to awe them,
And to eſtabliſh their power on their weakneſs.
Laſtly the manners of the Chriſtians
Are innocent, vertues do flouriſh with them,
Vices appear not; never an Adulterer,
A Traytor, Drunkard, Murtherer, or Thief
Is ſeen amongſt them, there is nothing elſe
But love and charity, they live together
Like Brothers, they pray for us that do perſecute them;
And have we ever ſince the time we firſt
Tormented them, ſeen them in mutiny?
Have we ſeen them rebellious! have our Princes

Had

Had Souldiers more faithfull; fierce in war
They ſuffer our tormentors patiently;
Lions in fight, they dy as meek as Lambs.
I've too much pitty for them not to help them:
Come, let us find out *Felix* preſently,
And ſo by one ſole action ſatisfie
Paulina, my compaſſion, and my glory.

The End of the fourth Act.

Actus Quintus. Scena Prima.

Felix, *Albin*, *Cleon.*

Felix.

ALbin, perceiv'ſt thou *Severus* plot?
Seeſt thou his hate, and my ſad miſery?

Alb. I ſee nought in him but a generous Rivall,
And in you nothing but a rigorous Father.

Fel. How ill thou know'ſt him? all he doth's but ſhew,
In heart he hates me, and diſdains *Paulina*,
And though he ſometime lov'd her he eſteemes now
A Rivals Relique too unworthy of him.
He ſpeaks in his behalf, prays, threatens me,
And ſayes he will deſtroy me, if I grant not
Pardon unto him, paſſing from generous
He thinks to fear me, but the Artifice
Is too groſs not to be diſcovered:
I know the Court, and all its ſubtle windings
Before him, I'm acquainted with its plots,
And all its practiſes, it is in vain
For him to ſtorm, and faign to be in fury,
I ſee what he intendeth to the Emperor,
Of that which he requeſts me, he'd accuſe me,
Sparing his Rivall, I ſhould be his Victime;
And if he had to do with ſome young Novice,
The plot is wel laid, without doubt he would
Deſtroy him eaſily, but an old Courtier
Is not ſo credulous, he ſeeth well
When one's in jeaſt, and when he is in earneſt;

And

And for my part, I've ſeen ſo many of them
Of all kinds, that if need were, I could give
Leſſons even unto him.
Alb. Gods! how you torture
Your ſelf by this diſtruſt?
Fel. To ſtand in Court
It is the higheſt skill; when once a man
Hath cauſe to hate us, we ought to preſume
That he ſeeks all the wayes he can to ruine us;
Then all his friendſhip is to be ſuſpected;
If *Polyeuctes* forſakes not his Sect,
What ever his Protector intends for him
I'le boldly follow th' order is preſcrib'd me.
Alb. Pardon, Sir, pardon, let *Paulina's* prayers
And tears obtain it.
Fel. Th' Emperours pardon, *Albin*,
Shall not come after mine, and ſo far am I
From drawing him out of this perilous paſs,
As not to do what will deſtroy us both.
Alb. But Sir, *Severus* promiſeth ——
Fel. I miſtruſt him,
And know better then he the hate of *Decius*,
In favour of the Chriſtians if he ſhould
Oppoſe his anger without doubt he would
Ruine himſelf with us, I will try yet
Another way. — Bring *Polyeuctes* here, —— *to Cleon.*
And if I ſend him back again, if he
Remain inſenſible of this laſt attempt, — *Cleon returns.*
At his departure hence he ſurely dies.
Alb. Your order is too rigorous.
Fel. I muſt follow it,
If I'le prevent diſorder which may happen;
I ſee the People mov'd to take his part,
And thou thy ſelf lately advertis'd me;
In the zeal which they do expreſs for him,
I know not how long he may be within
My power; perhaps this evening, to night,
To morow I may ſee th' effects I fear;
And ſuddenly *Severus* flying to
His vengeance, may go to calumniate me
With ſome intelligence, I muſt break this ſtroak,
That would be fatall to me.

Alb. What a ſtrange evil is this diffidence?
Every thing hurts and ruines you, gives you ſhadows,
But ſee you not, Sir, that his death will put
This people into rage? tis a wrong way
To cure them, for to make them deſperate.
Fel. After his death it is in vain to murmur,
And if they dare proceed to any violence,
Tis but to give way for a day or two
Unto the inſolence, I ſhall have done
My duty whatſoever may arrive;
But *Polyeuctes* comes, let us indeavour
To ſave him, retire Souldiers, and guard
The port well. ——— { Polyeuctes *comes with the Guards, who retire ſuddenly.*

Scena Secunda.

Felix, Polyeuctes, Albin.

Felix.
HAſt thou then ſuch a hate to life, unfortunate
And wretched *Polyeuctes*, and the Law
Of Chriſtians? doth it thus injoyn thee to
Forſake thy friends?
Pol. I hate not life, and love
The lawfull uſe of it, but without dotage,
Which ſavoureth of ſlavery, always ready
To render it to God. from whom I hold it,
Reaſon ordains it and the Chriſtian Law,
And thereby I inſtruct you how to live,
If you have but the heart to follow me.
Fel. To follow thee into the Gulph, where thou
Wilt caſt thy ſelf?
Pol. Rather unto the glory
Where I am going to aſcend.
Fel. At leaſt
Let me have time to know't, to make me Chriſtian,
Be thou my guide, and be not ſcrupulous
T'inſtruct me in thy faith, if thou refuſeſt,
Tis thou ſhalt anſwer't to thy God for me.
Pol. Felix, Jeaſt not, tis he ſhall be your Judge,
There is no flying from him, Kings and Shepheards

Are

Are of one rank with him, he will revenge
The blood of his upon you.
Fel. I'le ſhed no more,
And come what will on't, in the Chriſtian faith
I'le ſuffer them to live and will protect them.
Pol. No, no, proceed to perſecute, and be
The Inſtrument of our felicities;
A Chriſtian is at beſt, when he doth ſuffer;
The cruel'ſt torments are but recompences
Unto us; God that rendereth the Centuple
Unto good actions giveth perſecutions
To make up the full meaſure, but theſe Secrets
Are very hard for you to comprehend,
Tis but to his Elect that God reveals them.
Fel. I ſpeak to thee unfaignedly, and would
Be a true Chriſtian.
Pol. Who can then retard
Th'effect of ſuch a great and ſignall happineſs?
Fel. The preſence ——
Pol. Of whom? of *Severus*?
Fel. Only
For him I've feigned ſo much anger 'gainſt thee.
Diſſemble for a while, till he be gone.
Pol. Is it thus, *Felix*, that you ſpeak unfeignedly?
Bear to your Pagans, carry to your Idols
The impoyſoned honey which your words powr forth:
A Chriſtian feareth nothing, knoweth not
How to diſſemble, to the eyes of all
The world, he's ſtill a Chriſtian.
Fel. This zeal
Of thy faith ſerveth thee but to ſeduce thee,
If thou run to thy death before thou doſt
Inſtruct me.
Pol. I ſhould ſpeak unto you here
Unſeaſonably, it is a gift of Heaven,
And not of reaſon, there it is that I
Seeing God face to face ſhall obtain for you
This Grace more eaſily.
Fel. In the mean time
Thy loſs will make me deſperate.
Pol. You can
Repair it; free of one Son, you may have

Another when you pleaſe, whoſe quality
Anſwereth yours better; my loſs, Sir, would be
But a change advantagious unto you.
Fel. Forbear to injure me with this diſcourſe,
I have eſteem'd thee more then thou deſerv'ſt,
Bt in ſpight of my goodneſs which increaſeth
When thou provok'ſt it, in the end this inſolence
Would make thee odious and revenge mee on thee
Aſwell as our gods.
Pol. How? d'ee change ſo ſoon
Honour and Language? doth the zeal of your gods
Enter again into you? and to be
A Chriſtian vaniſheth? was it by chance
That you ſaid you would ſpeak unfeignedly?
Fel. Go to, preſume not, whatſoe'r I ſwear
Unto thee, that I'le follow the impoſture
Of thy new Doctors, I but flattered
Thy madneſs, to the end to ſnatch thee from
The fearfull precipice whereinto thou art
Ready to fall, I would gain time to Husband
Thy life after that *Decius* Favourite
Were with-drawn hence, but I have done too great
An injury to our omnipotent gods.
Chuſe whether thou wilt give thy blood unto them.
Or incenſe?
Pol. I'm not doubtfull in my choiſe,
But, O heaven! ſee *Paulina.*

Scena Tertia.

Felix, Polyeuctes, Paulina, Albin, Paulina.

WHich of you two do murther me to day?
Is't both together, or each at his turn?
What? can I neither bend nature, nor love?
And ſhall I obtain nothing either from
A Husband, or a Father?
Fel. Speak to your Husbond,
Paul. Live with *Severus.*
Paul. Tiger, murther me
Without this injury.

Pol.

Pol. My pitty ſeeks
As much as poſſible it may, to comfort you.
Our love doth carry you to ſuch true griefs,
That nothing but another love can cure
Thoſe wounds; ſince then ſo great a merit could
Inflame you, his fair preſence hath a right
To charm you, you did love him, he doth love you,
And his augmented glory. ——

Paul. Cruel, What have I done unto thee that
Thou treat'ſt me thus, as to reproach me with,
In contempt of my faith, ſo great a love
Which I've ſubdu'd for thee? ſee now, to make thee
Vanquiſh ſo ſtrong an adverſary, what attempts
I was to make againſt my ſelf, what combats
I had to give to thee a heart, ſo juſtly
Due to its firſt ſubduer; if ingratitude
Sway not my heart, make ſome attempt upon thee
To give thee to *Paulina*; learn of her
To force thy proper ſentiment, take her vertue
For guide unto thy blindneſs, ſuffer her
T'obtain thy life from thee thy ſelf, to live
Still ſubject to thy laws; but if thou canſt
Reject ſuch juſt deſires, at leaſt regard
Her tears, attend her ſighs, and make not deſperate
A ſoul that doth adore thee.

Pol. I've ſaid to you already, and *Paulina*,
I ſay again to you, live with *Severus*,
Or die with me, I deſpiſe not your tears,
Nor yet your faith, but henceforth I muſt have
No commerce with you, nor know you no more
Unleſs you be a Chriſtian. *Felix*, 'tis
Enough on't, take again your anger to you,
And on this inſolent revenge your gods
And you.

Paul. Oh Father! I confeſs, his crime's
Scarce pardonable, but if he diſtracted,
You, Sir, are reaſonable; nature is too ſtrong,
And its fair characters imprinted in
The blood are ne'r defac'd, a Father is
Always a Father, and on this aſſurance
I dare hald up ſome ſmall remains of hope:
Caſt a paternall look upon your daughter,

It is decreed my death ſhall forthwith follow
The death of this dear Criminall, and the gods
Will find her puniſhment unlawfull, ſince
She'le mingle innocence and crime together,
And ſo by this redoublement will change
Into an unjuſt rigour, a juſt chaſtiſement.
Our deſtinies made by your hands inſeperable,
We ought to make happy or miſerable
Together, and you ſhould be cruell even
Unto the extreameſt point to diſ-unite
What you have joyned, one heart to another
United once, never retires it ſelf,
You cannot ſeperate them unleſs you tear them;
But you are ſenſible of my juſt griefs,
And with a Fathers eye behold my tears.

Fel. Yes, Daughter, it is true, a Father is
Always a Father, nothing can raze out
The ſacred character thereof, I carry
A ſenſible heart, and you have pierced it,
I joyn me with you againſt this diſtracted.
Unfortunate, and wretched *Polyeuctes*,
Art thou alone inſenſible, and wilt
Thou only make thy crime unpardonable?
Canſt thou hear ſo many heart-breaking ſighs
From ſuch a tender breaſt? canſt thou behold
So much love, and be nothing touched with it?
Acknowledgeſt thou neither Father-in-Law
Nor Wife, without amity for the one,
Or love for th'other? to reſume the names
Of Son and Husband, wilt thou ſee us both
Fall at thy feet, and ſo imbrace thy knees?

Pol. Oh! how unhandſome is this artifice,
After twice having tryed threatning,
After making me ſee *Nearchus* dying,
After imploying love, and its effort,
After declaring to me that great thirſt
Of baptiſm to oppoſe to God the intereſt
Of God himſelf. You joyn your ſelves together?
Oh policy of Hell! muſt we o'recome
So many times before we triumph? ſure
Your reſolutions are ſo ſlow, take yours
At laſt, ſince, I've already taken mine.

I adore but one God, the Maſter of
The Univerſe, under whoſe feet, the Heaven,
The Earth, and Hell doth tremble, one God which
Loving us with an infinite love, dy'd for us
With ignominy, and which by an exceſs
Of that ſame love will every day be offer'd
As Victim for us; But I am too blame
To ſpeak of this to thoſe can't underſtand me:
See the blind error that you dare defend;
You defile all your gods with fouleſt crimes,
You puniſh not one ſin whoſe Maſter's not
I'th' heaven by your accompt;
Adultery, Inceſt, Proſtitution,
Theft, Murther, and what ever we deteſt,
It is the example which your Deities
Give you to follow; I've profan'd their Temple,
And broken down their Altars, I would do it
Again, if I could reach them, even before
The eyes of *Felix*, yea, before *Severus*,
And more, even in the preſence of the Senate,
Or of the Emperour himſelf.

Fel. At laſt
My goodneſs giveth place to my juſt fury,
Adore them, or thou dy'ſt.

Pol. I am a Chriſtian.

Fel. Thou impious wretch, I ſay again, adore them,
Or renounce life.

Pol. I am a Chriſtian.

Fel. Art thou? O heart too obſtinate! Souldiers, execute
The order that I gave, —— } Cleon *and the other Guards take*
Paul. Where lead you him? } Polyeuctes *away*, Paulina *fol-*
Fel. To death. } *lows him.*

Pol. To glory.
Adiew my dear *Paulina*, love my memory.

Paul. I'le follow thee throughout, and even to death.

Pol. Forſake your errour, or not follow me.

Fel. Take him away, and ſee I be obey'd,
Since he deſires to dye, 'tis fit he periſh.

Scena

Scena Quarta.

Felix, *Albin*.

Felix.

Albin, I do me violence, but I muſt,
My gentle nature would have eaſily
Deſtroy'd me, let the peoples rage at preſent
Diſplay it ſelf, and let *Severus* thunder,
And fret with fury having performed this
I am ſecure; but art not thou ſurpriz'd
With this unſhaken conſtancy? ſeeth thou
Impenetrable hearts like his, or ſuch.
Horrid impieties? I have ſatisfied
My grieved heart, and have neglected nothing
To make his ſoft and yielding; I have feigned
Before thy eyes baſe wickedneſs, and ſurely
Had it not been for his laſt blaſphemies,
Which fill'd me ſuddenly with fear and anger,
I ſhould have ſcarce triumphed o'r my ſelf.

Alb. You'l one day curſe perhaps this victory,
Which favoureth of I know not what an action
Too black, unworthy *Felix*, and a *Roman*,
Shedding your blood thus by your proper hand.

Fel. So ſometime *Brutus*, and ſtout *Manlius* ſhed it,
Which added to their glory, far from leſſening it;
Never have our old *Hero's* had ill blood,
But they have opened their proper bowels
To let it out.

Alb. Your hea: ſeduceth you;
But whatſoe'r it tell you, when you once
Shall find it cold, when you ſhall ſee *Paulina*,
And that her ſad deſpair expreſſed by
Her crys and waylings ſhall come forth to move you.——

Fel. Thou mak'ſt me to remember that ſhe follow'd
That Traytor, This deſpair which ſhe will ſhew,
May interrupt the effect of my command;
Go therefore, and gi:e order it be done,
See what he doth, break any obſtacle
Her griefs may give unto it, and withdraw her
From that ſad ſpectacle, if thou canſt indeavour

To

To comfort her; go then, who holdeth thee?
Alb. There is no need, Sir, ſhe returns her ſelf.

Scena Quinta.

Felix, Paulina, Albin.

Paulina.

BArbarous Father, finiſh thy black work,
This ſecond ſacrifice is worth thy rage,
Joyn thy ſad Daughter to thy Son-in-Law,
Why tarry'ſt thou? thou ſeeſt here the ſame crime,
Or the ſame vertue; thy barbarity
In her hath the ſame matter; my dear Husband
Left me his lights in dying, his juſt blood,
With which his Executioners are comming
To cover me, hath opened mine eyes:
I ſee, I know, I do believe, and am
Free of mine error, I am undeceiv'd,
Thou ſeeſt me baptis'd with that bleſt blood;
Laſtly, I am a Chriſtian, have I not
Spoken enough? keep in deſtroying me,
Thy rank and credit, fear the Emperour.
And doubt *Severus*, if thou wilt not periſh,
My death is neceſſary, *Polyeuctes* cals me
Unto his happy death, I ſee *Nearchus*
And he both ſtretching forth their hands unto me:
Bring me to ſee thy gods which I deteſt,
They broke but one, I will break all the reſt,
There you ſhall ſee me brave all that you fear,
Thoſe ſilly Thunder-bolts which you depaint
Within their hands, and holily rebellious
Unto the Laws of birth, thou once ſhalt ſee me
Fail in obedience to thee; it is not
My grief that I do make appear therein,
Tis grace within me ſpeaks, and not deſpair.
May I ſay it again? *Felix*, I am
A Chriſtian, ſettle by my death thy fortune
And mine, the ſtroke to both on's will be precious,
Since it aſſureth the one earth, and lifts me
Unto the Heavens.

Scena Ultima.

Felix, Severus, Paulina, Albin, Fabian.

Severus.

UNnaturall Father, wretched Polititian,
Ambitious ſlave to a Chymerick fear,
Is *Polyeuctes* dead then by your cruelties,
And think you to conſerve your ſorry dignities?
The favour which for him I offer'd you,
Inſtead of ſaving him, haſted his death;
I prayed, threatned, but I could not move you;
You thought me falſe, or but of little power,
But you ſhall know at your coſt that *Severus*
Boaſts not of any thing but what he can
Perform, and by your ruine he will make you
To judge that he who can deſtroy you, could
Have protected you; continue to
The gods this faithfull ſervice. by ſuch horrors
Shew them your zeal, adiew, but when the ſtorm
Shall break upon you, doubt not of the arm
From whence the ſtrokes ſhall come.

Fel. Severus, ſtay,
And with a quiet mind ſuffer that I
Give you an eaſie vengeance, by my cruelties
Ceaſe to reproach me more, I do indeavour
To keep my ſorry dignities, I diſpoſe
Their falſe deceitfull luſtre to your feet;
That glory whereunto I dare t'aſpire
Is a rank more illuſtrious, I do find
My ſelf forc'd to it by a ſecret bait,
I yield to thoſe tranſports I do not know,
And by a wo king which I underſtand not,
I from my fury paſs unto the zeal
Of my bleſt Son-in-law; tis he no doubt,
Whoſe innocent blood prays an Almighty God
For me his Perſecutor, his love ſpred
On all the Family, draws after him
As well the Father as the Daughter, I
Have made a Martyr of him, and his death
Hath made me Chriſtian, I procur'd his bliſs,
He will work mine, ſo is it that a Chriſtian

Is angry and revengeth, happy cruelty
Whoſe event is ſo ſweet! *Paulina*, give me
Thy hand, bring fetters here, and ſacrifice
Unto your gods theſe two new Chriſtians
I am one, She is ſo, obſerve your anger.
Paul. How happily at laſt I find my Father!
This bleſſed change maketh my joy compleat.
Fel. Daughter, it doth belong but to the hand
That doth it.
Sev. Who would not be touch'd with
A ſpectacle ſo tender? I believe
Such changes come not without miracle,
Your Chriſtians without doubt, which we in vain
Do perſecute, have ſomething in them which
Surpaſſeth humane, they do lead a life
With ſo much innocence, that Heaven doth owe them
Some great acknowledgement; to ſhew themſelves
More ſtrong the more they are oppreſs'd, is not
Th' effect of common vertues; I ſtill lov'd them,
What ever might be ſaid on't, I ne'r ſaw them
To dye, but this heart ſighed for't, and perhaps,
I ſhall one day be better known unto them:
In the mean time I like that every one
Should have his own gods, and that he ſhould ſerve them
After his own way without fear of puniſhment,
If you are Chriſtians, fear no more my hate,
I love them, *Felix*, and from their Protector,
I will not make a Perſecutor of them
In you: guard well your power, take it again,
Serve your God, ſerve your Monarch, I will loſe
My credit with his Majeſty, or he
Shall ſhake off this ſeverity, by his
Unjuſt hate he doth too much wrong himſelf.
Fel. Daign gracious Heaven to end his work in you,
And one day to give you what you deſerve,
T'inſpire into you all his ſacred Truths:
For us we bleſſe this fortunate adventure,
Come, let us go to give our Martyrs buriall,
To kiſs their precious bodies, and to put them
In holy place, in conſecrated ground,
Then let us make the name of God reſound.

FINIS.